

# SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

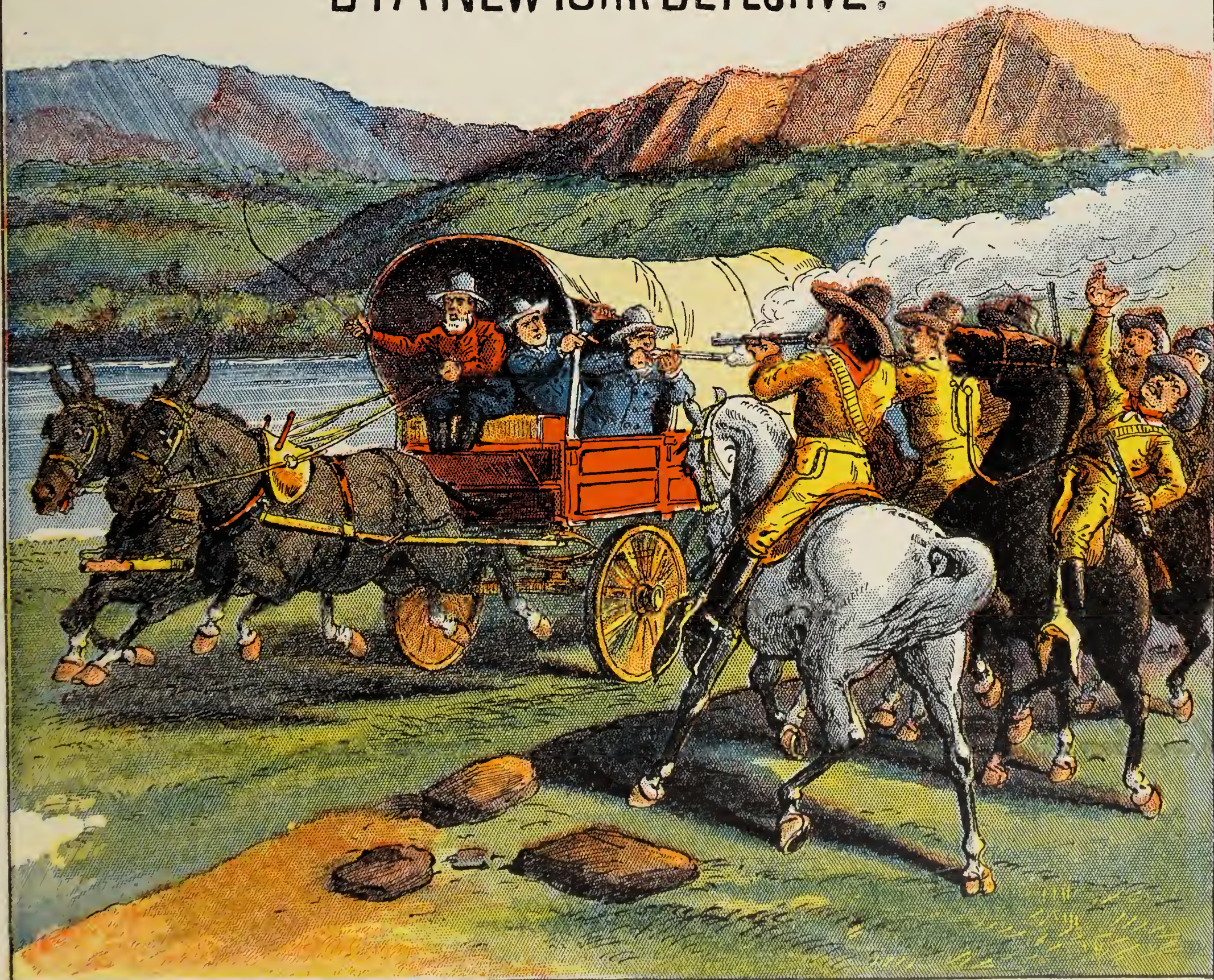
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NEW YORK, JULY 19, 1901.

Price 5 Cents.

## THE BRADYS AND THE DEADSHOT GANG; OR LIVELY WORK ON THE FRONTIER BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.



"Hold on thar, Peterson!" yelled Big Ike. Up went the flap of the schooner and Old and Young King Brady opened fire.



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(Continued on page 3 of cover.)



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## The Bradys and the Dead-Shot Gang

OR,

### LIVELY WORK ON THE FRONTIER.

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE CASE ON THE FRONTIER.

"Somewhere out in the country is the man who murdered my brother," said the stern-faced, gray-bearded man who sat in the office of the chief of the Secret Service. "I have the money and the influence, and I intend that my brother's fate shall be avenged."

"You have the necessary evidence to convict him, I suppose?" asked the chief.

"I have three witnesses."

"And you wish detective service?"

"I do, and I want the best man you have. I am willing to pay for it."

"Very well! What are the facts in the case?"

"Four years ago, my brother, Arthur Foss, was a well-to-do merchant in this city of New York. In his employ was a trusted clerk named Dudley Dean.

"Dean had entire charge of the books and the private papers of my brother's business. One day he turned up missing, and with him went forty thousand dollars of my brother's money.

"It left my brother's family impoverished. At the time, I, James Foss, was in Australia, and I did not know of the affair until a year later.

"My brother's body was found in the cellar of his store frightfully bruised. He had lived long enough to scratch on a board with a bit of pencil an accusation against Dean.

"I at once sent help to my brother's family. Thereafter,

I lived only to get home and avenge him. It took me nearly three years to settle up my business. But here I am, and I shall not rest until Dudley Dean is brought to justice."

"Ah!" said the chief. "I remember the Foss murder. In fact, I believe we have a detective on our force who knows something about it."

"Who is he?"

"His name is James Brady, or better known as Old King Brady."

"Can I see him?"

"I will see if I can reach him at his lodgings. There are two of these Bradys, the old detective and a younger man, who is a partner and pupil. His name is Harry Brady; though they are not related by any ties of blood, yet they are very warm friends."

The chief touched a transmitter on the wall.

A moment later a bell tinkled, and he opened the telephone receiver. It was a private line.

Presently the chief laid down the receiver after a few words over the wire, and said:

"He will be here in a very short while."

The returned Australian waited, discussing the case meanwhile with the chief.

"Brady will know something about it," said the latter. "I am sure no detectives on earth could handle this case so well for you as the Bradys."

"They shall be well paid," declared the Australian. "I am rich and can spend any amount. I am burning to avenge my brother."



It might have been twenty minutes by the clock when the door opened, and two men entered.

They were of remarkable appearance.

The old man, of tall and strong figure, strong features and gray hair, was known to every criminal in America.

Old King Brady, the king of sleuths, was the terror of the evil-doer far and wide.

His protege and partner, the young man beside him, Harry Brady, was scarcely less famous.

The two famous detectives advanced, and the chief said:

"Gentlemen, I must introduce you to Mr. Foss from Australia. He will tell you his case and, perhaps, you can do something to help him."

The detectives bowed.

"We are at the gentleman's service," said Old King Brady, in his courteous way.

They shook hands with the Australian.

"You remember the Arthur Foss murder, Brady," said the chief, "about four years ago."

The old detective's eyes flashed.

"Yes," he said, in his laconic way.

"Well, this is the brother of the victim of that tragedy. He wants to bring the murderer to justice."

Old King Brady fixed a penetrating gaze upon the Australian.

"I recall the case very well," he said. "I was busy on a Pullman car mystery at that time and could not give it my attention. But I was much interested. I believe the murderer was said to be Dudley Dean."

"He is the scoundrel," declared Foss, savagely. "My brother trusted him implicitly and he proved false to that trust."

"That is your belief?"

"Yes."

Then, with an after thought, Foss asked:

"Is it not yours?"

Not a line of Old King Brady's face changed, as he said:

"No!"

Astonished beyond expression, the Australian stared at the detective.

"What?" he gasped. "You don't believe Dean did it?"

"I do not!"

"But what became of him? Why did he disappear? What became of the money? Who else could have done it?"

Old King Brady gave a quiet shrug of the shoulders.

"Well," he said, "I base my conclusions on my knowledge of the operations of a certain gang about that time."

"A gang?"

"Yes."

"What do you mean?"

"Big Ike Bent, the West Side garroter and back-door thief, to my knowledge had your brother's gold watch in his possession after that affair. That day he was known to have been in that locality with his gang. Moreover, one of his pals was caught with the keys of the old iron safe in his

pocket. Those keys to-day are in the museum at the Central Office.

This was most astonishing.

"I told you," said the chief. "I knew that Brady could tell you something about the case."

"But," stammered Foss, "I cannot see that it clears Dean. He disappeared and might have been in league with the gang."

"Very true," agreed Old King Brady. "But if he was guilty, he was not alone."

"This is most remarkable. It certainly changes the complexion of the case."

"Yes," agreed Old King Brady. "So I would not judge Dean too harshly. I have always had an idea that he might have been a victim as well as your brother."

"Do you think it possible?"

"Indeed, I do. He was an old and trusted employee. He had always been faithful to his trust. I would give him the benefit of the doubt."

But the Australian's face was hard.

"Impossible!" he said. "My brother's dying accusation cannot be disposed of."

"I don't know about that."

"Well, how?"

"Your brother was found in the cellar of his store the next day. The store was locked on the outside, and the key was missing."

"Yes."

"Now, the gang might have killed Dean as well as your brother. To blind justice, they could have devised the confession, or accusation, written on the board. In fact, it would be just such a trick as they would play."

"But what did they do with Dean?"

"They knew that he must be disposed of, so they may have taken his body away and, perhaps, thrown it into the river."

But Foss was incredulous.

"I can hardly accept your theory as yet," he said. "I am disposed to believe Dean the guilty man."

"But how do you explain the articles found on Bent's pal?"

"Oh, Dean may have disposed of them in some way. More than that, I am sure that Dean is alive!"

"Alive?"

"Yes."

It was the Bradys' turn to be surprised.

"How do you know that? Where is he?"

"He was seen by a friend of mine in Boise City, Idaho. There is no doubt about the identification. My friend spoke with Dean."

"Was there any reference to the murder?"

"None whatever. Dean was with a gang of rustlers, and as it was a lawless region, my friend could take no action."

The detectives exchanged glances. The case was growing interesting.

"Well, Mr. Foss," said Old King Brady. "If Dean is



alive, it disposes of my theory. But he must be made to explain matters."

"That is it."

"And you would like us to track him down?"

"That is just it. Bring him East and to trial. I want my brother avenged."

For a time the detectives were silent. Finally the chief said:

"Well, Brady, what is the word?"

"We will take the case," said Old King Brady, arising. "We start for Idaho to-night. We will report to you when we have won success."

The Australian put out his hand.

"Shake!" he cried. "I'll never cease to long for your success. And to tell the truth, I like your style. You'll win!"

## CHAPTER II.

### IN THE WEST.

In all the fair land of America there is no more witching region of romance and adventure than the mountain State of Idaho, with its deep mountain parks, its scenic rivers, buttes and plains, valleys and vales and snow-capped peaks.

Here the winters are of the most severe, the summers of the most balmy and gentle kind.

Cowboys and rustlers, Indian hunters, trappers and miners make up the major part of the population.

It constitutes what little there is left to-day of the old-time picturesque frontier life.

White Park, deep among the Rockies, was one of the most beautiful spots in Idaho.

Here a community had planted a small town known as Golden City.

In the mountains the miners dug silver and gold quartz, and lead and tin.

Every night the motley crew descended to spend their earnings in the dance halls and gin-mills of Golden City.

On the smooth, green plains through the Park, stock men herded their cattle, farmers planted corn and wheat.

In the mountain rivers and streams white and Indian hunters fished and trapped the beaver and otter.

A daily stage connected Golden City with the outside world.

So far as Golden City denizens cared, there need have been no outside world, save for the tenderfoot who came to them to be regularly plucked as legitimate game.

The mountain trail, which led down into White Park, was a dangerous road to travel.

Many a stage was held up and robbed by outlaws.

The most widely known of these road agents was Big Ike Bent, who flourished in Idaho in the summer and migrated to Arizona in the winter.

Little was known about Big Ike in Golden City, save that he came from the effete East, and was a fugitive from the law.

Many an expedition had been fitted out to rout him out of the hills.

But he had a strong following back of him and could always more than hold his own.

His name was a synonym of terror to the travelers in the mountain.

Into this region it was that the Bradys made their way.

Leaving the railroad fully one hundred miles behind they traveled on pony back, preferring this to the dreary stage ride.

At night the Bradys camped by the trail. In their saddle bags they carried plenty of food.

The hardy Oregon ponies carried them at a gentle lope hour after hour over the trail.

One evening they had entered upon a winding mountain road which led along the bank of a steep descent.

The altitude was high, and the ponies breathed hard with effort. Suddenly a startling sound came to the hearing of the detectives.

Crack! Crack!

Loud yells were interspersed with the crack of firearms.

"What's up?" exclaimed Harry.

"Somebody is in trouble. They may need help."

"Shall we go ahead?"

"Yes."

The detectives spurred their ponies on.

As they rounded the bend of the trail they came upon a startling scene.

The lumbering Golden City stage was standing in the middle of the trail.

The driver sat motionless on his box.

There was a reason for it. He had a bullet hole through the brain.

The half dozen passengers had sought to resist the road agents, and two of them were shot dead in the coach.

The others were now prisoners, and being ransacked for valuables by the outlaws.

The detectives beheld this spectacle with thrilling sensations.

They saw that there were a dozen of the road agents.

They were two against twelve, and the odds seemed too great. For a moment Old King Brady hesitated.

But, to his surprise, the outlaws, at sight of the detectives, beat a hasty retreat.

They clattered away down the mountain at a terrific pace. It was possible that they thought the Bradys the vanguard of a large force of Vigilants.

The next moment the Bradys pulled up beside the coach.

By way of a bluff, they sent a few shots after the robbers.

Their example was followed by the four surviving passengers.

Such a fusilade had the desired effect of still more fully impressing the road agents that a band of Vigilants had come to the rescue.

"Thank Heaven, you came in time," cried one of the passengers. "We shot three of the rascals."

"And lost three men!" said Old King Brady.



"Yes. I don't see what they killed the driver for."

"He tried to keep on," said another passenger.

"Well," said Harry. "We are glad to have been on hand. Are you bound for Golden City?"

"Yes."

The four men were of the miner type, and their placer outfits were on top of the coach.

They introduced themselves and fraternized at once with the Bradys.

"But how in thunder will we git down to Golden City?" cried one of them. "Thar ain't a six-hoss driver among us."

"I've driven six horses," said another. "But not on this kind of a trail."

Old King Brady looked along the narrow shelf of rock and down into the mighty gorge.

Surely it was a trick of a hazardous kind to tool a coach down that rough trail.

But he said:

"Well, friends, if you'll risk your necks with me, I'll drive her down the mountain."

The miners stared.

"Kin ye do it?"

"I think so."

"All right. If ye break our necks ye'll break yer own."

"I'll take the chances."

"But—what about the dead men?"

"It won't do ter leave 'em."

"The buzzards will get 'em."

"We'll bury them right here," said the old detective. "Bring down some shovels."

Shovels were plenty in the miners' outfits, and in a few moments six graves were dug in the soft sandy soil.

They were shallow, but made secure from wild beasts by piling heavy stones on them.

This done, Old King Brady bared his head and said a prayer over them.

Then he leaped upon the coach and picked up the reins. Harry rode behind, holding his pony.

It was a dangerous trail which led down the mountains, as the detectives knew.

Old King Brady was a skilled whip, but driving wild mustangs on a narrow shelf of rock like that was something to try the nerve.

On the jump the lithe horses leaped away.

The old detective, however, handled them like a veteran.

Beside him sat a man who was a type of frontiersman from head to toe.

He stroked his prodigiously long mustache and at times looked Old King Brady over keenly.

Finally he ejected a huge wad of tobacco from his mouth, and said:

"Doggone me, but ye air the coolest tenderfoot ever cum inter Idaho. D'ye hear?"

"Eh!" said the old detective. "Do you think so?"

"I'm not a durned bit sure that ye're no more tenderfoot than I am."

Old King Brady smiled.

"Well, there are keen people where I come from," he said.

"Whar's that?"

"Over two thousand miles away," replied Old King Brady, evasively.

"That might be down ter Panama."

"Yes, or up to Hudson Bay."

"Humph! What do ye know about the West?"

"Very little. But I learn easy."

"Durned if I don't believe ye. Kin ye shoot?"

"I can aim."

"Wall, ye'll have to be a dead-shot if ye expect ter git along in these parts."

"Are you a dead shot?"

"Hey?" said the rustler, opening wide his eyes. "Has a chicken got feathers? Kin a frog jump? Wall, I'm one of ther Dead-Shot Gang."

"Sho! You don't say!" exclaimed the old detective, with mock wonder.

"Wall, I kin prove it. Do ye see that fly on that off lead broncho's ear? Wall, I'll flick it off with my thirty-eight fer a hundred even up."

With this the fellow drew out his heavy revolver. But Old King Brady said:

"Humph! Any boy can do that. Do you see that buzzard down there?"

The miner looked far down into the great gulf of the gorge, which was fully two thousand feet deep.

A thousand feet, or half the distance down, a buzzard was soaring in a circle. Any marksman knows how hard it is to hit a bird on the wing while high in air.

"Yas, I see him."

"I'll bet you two hundred to one you can't stop his motion in three shots."

"I'll take ye!" declared the miner. "Put up yer soap."

The money was put up with another miner, who whispered in Old King Brady's ear.

"Ye're foolish. That's Flash Pete Conroy, the keenest shot in the mines. He has a record of eleven dead men."

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE DEAD-SHOT GANG.

Old King Brady had sized the fellow up before this information was given him.

He saw that he was of the type of dead-shot "bad man" to be found in all mining or lawless regions.

Flash Pete had killed eleven men with his quick fire and deadly, sure aim. This had earned him a tremendous reputation in that region.

Most men steered clear of him and did not risk an altercation of any kind with him.

But Old King Brady knew little about him, and cared less.

Flash Pete's keen black eye followed the course of the buzzard a moment.



Then he crooked his elbow like a flash and fired.

The buzzard gave a little, perceptible movement, but kept on soaring.

"Ye hit him, Pete," cried one of the miners.

"No, he didn't," cried another. "Thet bullet grazed him. Thet's all."

Once again Pete fired.

This time the bird did not show any shock whatever. A curse escaped the ruffian's lips.

"I kin do it," he gritted.

Once again he raised his pistol. Again it spoke: Crack!

The buzzard still continued to cut a wide circle. All three shots had missed.

A volley of curses escaped Flash Pete.

He sat back discomfited. But there was a gleam of satisfaction in his eyes as he reflected upon the fact that it was likely that his opponent could do no better.

Old King Brady smiled grimly.

He straightened the lead horses, glanced once over the edge of the descent, and then laid his whip across his knee.

"You didn't hit him," he said.

"No," growled Pete. "And you can't, either."

"Are you sure of that?"

"You can't outshoot me?"

"Well, if I could not shoot that bird down there in three shots, I'd never pretend to be a crack-shot."

Flash Pete's face was livid.

"Oh, ye wouldn't, eh?" he scoffed. "Well, ye won't hit him in a hundred."

"I'll bet you ten to one I'll hit him in a hundred trys."

"Oh, go on! We've made our bet, and I'm waiting for my money."

"You've seen the last of it," said Old King Brady, as he quickly pulled his revolver from his belt.

The six horses were straight just then. The coach was on a good, safe track, and the opportunity was good.

Quick as a flash, and yet with nonchalance, Old King Brady leaned a bit over the side of the driver's seat and fired.

Crack!

The buzzard gave a spasmodic, upward swing, then fluttered, beat wildly with its huge wings, and then shot downward.

Flash Pete was speechless. He stared at Old King Brady like one in a dream.

The old detective put up his revolver and picked up his reins.

He cracked the whip and the coach went booming down the mountain side.

The miners on top of the coach were just as astonished as Flash Pete. The latter finally leaned forward and peered into Old King Brady's face.

"Who air you?" he asked.

"I'm a tenderfoot."

"Durned if I believe it. No greenhorn could make a hot like that."

"I can repeat it any time I choose. Let's see, I believe I get the money."

"Yas," growled Flash Pete, in a sulky way. "Do ye reckon to stop in Golden City?"

"Sure!"

"Wall, ye'll have a chance to try yer shootin' afore ye've been there long. I want to tell ye, that if ye can beat me, ye can beat 'em all."

"Then the rest must be easy," said Old King Brady, coolly. This was like a match to tinder.

Flash Pete's face became purple.

"Eh?" he hissed. "Thet's an insult."

His hand flew to his belt. There was no doubt but that he would have killed Old King Brady then and there.

But before he could draw he looked into the muzzle of a pistol in the detective's own hand.

"Hands up!"

Flash Pete's jaw fell. For a moment he was disposed to refuse. But the hammer clicked and he wisely obeyed.

For the first time Flash Pete had been called down with the drop on him.

He had met his match.

His face was contorted and pallid with rage.

Old King Brady, with the other hand, reined up the horses. His face was grim and resolute.

"Get off this coach," he said, sternly. "Get off before I shoot you off."

There was no disobeying that command. Pete had glanced half appealingly at the others. But they were neutral.

"What d'ye mean?" he demanded. "What d'ye want me ter git off fer?"

"You meant to shoot me."

"How do ye know?"

"I saw it in your face."

"Aw, I was going to frighten ye. Put up yer shooter!"

"No, I think not. I believe I'll kill you."

Old King Brady's eyes gleamed along the barrel. But Pete tumbled off the box to the road.

"Don't pull," he yelled. "I'm goin' ter do it. But ye ain't goin' to leave me here ter walk ter Golden City?"

"That's what," said Old King Brady, stiffly. "And I hope you'll cool off a little before you get there. Don't pick up every tenderfoot for a flat. You may get left again."

Flash Pete was insane with impotent rage.

"Curse you!" he hissed. "I'll follow you to yer grave. I'll kill you on sight."

"Not if I see you first," cried Old King Brady. "Gee up there!"

The coach rattled on leaving Flash Pete in the mountain trail cursing like a madman.

Old King Brady had taken the precaution to take his pistol away from him, so that he could do no harm.

He was quickly out of sight. Cool as ice, the old detective tooled the horses down through the last gorge and entered the valley road.



The rest of the passengers were dumbfounded by the nerve of the new stage driver.

Finally one of them ventured to say:

"Ye'll hev to hev eyes in the back of yer head hereafter, captain. You bet Flash Pete will shoot you at the first chance."

"If he tries it, and I can get sight of him, I'll kill him sure," said the old detective, quietly.

And now the trail broadened, and the rude structures of the mining town showed below.

It was the evening hour when the stage rolled up to the door of the Golden City Hotel, and the motley crowd of miners and adventurers crowded around it.

A sensation was created when it was learned that the stage had been held up and the driver killed.

Old King Brady became the cynosure of all eyes.

The miner passengers told of his nerve and the manner in which he had outwitted Flash Pete.

"An' he's a tenderfoot at that."

But Old King Brady had already decided upon the hand he would play in Golden City.

It would be a high one.

So he alighted from the stage and walked into the hotel. Harry soon came up and joined him.

"Give us the best room you've got," he said to the clerk.

That worthy, with alacrity, proceeded to do so. The Bradys went to their chamber.

"Well," said Harry, as they proceeded to wash and prepare for supper, "we got through all right—partner."

"You're right!" agreed the old detective. "Twice I thought we had got to step off, though."

"This is a warm country."

"Well, I should say so."

"We are likely to have some hot work."

"To be sure!"

"What is our game?"

"We can only play the hand in one way."

"Bluff?"

"Yes, of the hardest kind. There is a hard gang here, and to beat them we must more than meet them half-way."

"That is, at their own game?"

"Yes."

"Shall I pose for a dead-shot also?"

"Of course! We are pards, and must fight together. We will soon know whether we are to rule or not."

"This Dead-Shot Gang seems to have the call here just now."

"Yes."

"Flash Pete is probably their leader."

"No, I don't think so. I imagine this man Bent is the leader."

"Ah, he is the fellow whom we saw under arrest with the gold watch of Arthur Foss on his person."

"Yes."

"He is the real murderer."

"That is our point of view. Of course, we have yet to

prove it. But if Dean is also out here in hiding, that puts a new face on the matter."

"We shall soon find out."

"I hope so."

So Old King Brady decided upon strong tactics. He would play a high hand in Golden City.

Just how well he did it and how he succeeded in holding his own with the Dead-Shot Gang we have yet to see.

The Bradys now went downstairs again.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A WARM ARGUMENT.

The barroom of the hotel was crowded at this hour.

Miners were in from a hard day's work to try their luck at the gaming tables.

Herders and cowboys, Indians and Mexicans, all made up the big assemblage.

The shuffling of cards and the chucking of dice was on every side. Drinks were passed over the bar as fast as the perspiring clerks could handle them.

It was just such a scene as one sees anywhere on the frontier in mining communities.

As Old King Brady and Harry entered the place, all eyes were turned upon them.

The tall, powerful frame of the great detective, his strong, stern features, would attract attention in any crowd.

He swaggered through the crowd, and they gave way on every side.

Old King Brady swept the room with an eagle glance.

"All up for drinks!" he shouted.

Instantly there was a semblance of a cheer and a rush for the bar.

The old detective threw a couple of bank notes of high figure on the bar.

"Give 'em the best you've got," he said to the bartender.

The drinks were dealt out. But all waited for the detectives to drink first, as was etiquette.

Old King Brady had called for a light wine.

He held his glass up.

"Friends," he cried, "I'm a stranger in this 'ere place. But I'll soon get acquainted. I propose your health and your families'."

This was a popular chord. There was an uproarious cheer. All drained their glasses.

"Once again!" shouted Old King Brady.

Again the glasses were filled.

"Here's success to the town and the hotel," cried the old detective. "May it grow and prosper!"

Again there was a cheer.

Again the glasses were drained.

"Once more!" cried Old King Brady. "We'll drink to the downfall of the road agents and the extermination of the Dead-Shot Gang!"



A dead silence fell upon the room. Men gasped and rubbed their eyes.

They stared at the old detective, who coolly drained his glass. He looked inquiringly at the hesitating crowd. Then a contemptuous smile curled his lips.

"Oh, what's the matter?" he asked, in a sneering voice. "Don't you like that toast? Or are you all cowards?"

"The man who drinks that toast will be marked," said a harsh voice from a distant part of the room.

"Indeed!" said Old King Brady. "I've drank it."

"Then you are marked."

"Show yourself, and I'll mark you."

There was a movement in the crowd, and a man stepped into view.

The miners fell back instinctively as he did so. Old King Brady was face to face with him.

He was a big, hulking fellow, with long hair and a heavy mustache. His under lip was heavy and drooping, and his mouth cut in a cruel leer at the corners.

His eyes were dark and lustreless. He was dressed in the garb of the plainsman and carried an arsenal of weapons in his belt.

"I haven't the honor of your acquaintance," said Old King Brady, with quiet dignity.

"My name is Bent."

"Oh! I've heard of you. I believe you are known in New York City."

Bent started as if shot, and a livid color overspread his face. The lash of a whip across it could not have more thoroughly convulsed it.

"Who are you?" he gritted.

"I am a peaceable citizen of the United States. My home is wherever night finds me. You may call me Smith for want of a better name."

A hard, cruel light shone in Bent's eyes. With it was mingled distrust and a kind of fear.

His hand instinctively stole toward his pistol belt.

But Old King Brady saw the move, and said:

"Put your hands up!"

Bent obeyed as if the order were already enforced. His eyes blazed with fury.

"Are ye reckonin' on livin' in Golden City?" he asked.

"I am."

"Wall, I'd advise ye to think it over a little. It's a warm place fer Smiths."

"That's what I came here for."

"Oh, ye did?"

"Yes, the hotter the better for me. I just love tropical weather."

"Ye spoke about New York."

"Yes."

"What do ye know about it?"

"I once knew of a man there named Foss. He had a clerk named Dudley Dean. Do you understand?"

The two men looked full at each other. Bent quailed before the old detective's gaze.

Each understood the other.

Old King Brady knew that this man was the murderer.

Bent knew that here was a sworn foe. He could read the handwriting of fate on the wall.

"I don't believe you an' I are goin' to hitch," said Bent, coldly.

"Not together," said Old King Brady. "I may live to see you hitched to the limb of a tree."

"Curse ye! It's war!"

"Yes, if you wish."

"Will ye have it out now?"

"Any time."

Bent trembled with suppressed rage and hate. His fingers worked convulsively.

"What do ye say?" he gritted.

"Knives or pistols. I don't care which."

"What's yer game here?"

"Well, I don't mind telling you. I've heard of this 'ere Dead-Shot Gang, and I'm bound to make a move to wipe it out."

"You?"

"Yes."

Bent laughed contemptuously.

"Four to one, an' all dead-shots. Ye're likely to have a winnin' hand."

"I'm kind of stuck on this town," said Old King Brady. "I kind of think I can straighten things out here and make a smart place of it. There's no hope for it so long as a gang of pestilential buzzards like you infest it."

"That's far enough!" gritted Bent, whipping out his bowie. "You've got to fight."

"Do you mean it?"

"In course I mean it. If ye squawk now, ye'd better git out. It's knives ter settle it."

"I haven't got a knife."

The crowd was intensely excited. They surged forward, all eyes fixed on the two men.

"Let 'em settle it!"

"Fight it out!"

"Go fer him, Bent!"

"Carve him up, tenderfoot!"

Bent brandished his bowie in a way that showed he was familiar with its use.

Old King Brady held up his hand.

"Make it pistols," he said.

"No," replied Bent. "It's my choice. I told ye, ye'd squawk!"

"Look here!" said the old detective, calmly. "You've challenged me. The choice of weapons belongs to me."

"No, ye don't," cried Bent. "Ye insulted me, an' that gives me the choice."

"Not by the code."

"Dang the code! Will ye fight? If ye don't, I'll cut off yer ears."

"If you're not a coward, you'll agree to a duel with pistols at ten paces."

The crowd gasped. This was a terrible challenge. It would mean death to both men.



But Bent showed his cowardly spirit. He believed that he had the advantage with the bowie, and he was anxious to distinguish himself before the crowd.

Duels with the bowie were popular in that part of Idaho.

The shout went up:

"Fight it out with the knife."

"That's fair!"

"Cut him up, Ike!"

"I told ye he was a cantankerous coward," yelled Bent.

"He don't dare ter fight——"

The words were hardly out of his mouth when the old detective's right hand smote him across the face like the crack of a whip.

At the same moment the old detective grasped his wrist and wrenched the big bowie from him.

Bent was hurled to the floor with stunning force. The old detective took the knife by the point and flung it into the ceiling, where it embedded itself some inches in the rafters.

"I don't need any knife to fight a dog-like you," roared the old detective. "You dirty whelp! Now, will you beg?"

The crowd roared with excitement. Bent regained his feet. He glared at the detective furiously.

"Ye took me unawares," he howled. "I'll fight ye with knives to the death."

"I tell you I haven't got a knife," replied the old detective. "I don't go around stabbing people in the back after dark."

A great shout went up from the crowd.

"Let 'em fight it out! He jumped on him when he wasn't ready! It was no fair shake!"

Old King Brady saw the sentiment at once.

Harry said in a low voice:

"I guess we've got to use our pop-guns, partner."

"No," said the old detective. "Let him have his knife. I'll meet him."

"Don't say that! Let me fight him!"

"Easy!" said Old King Brady. "We're playing a hard game. It's my chance."

## CHAPTER V.

### THE DUEL.

The crowd seemed to be with Bent. Old King Brady found out afterward that this was because his pals were doing the shouting.

Now, as a matter of fact, the old detective was a master of the short sword and dagger play, having learned it abroad.

But he had been playing a bluff hand from the first.

It was his purpose to draw his man out.

He had done so.

Now he was in just the position he desired. He had no doubt of his ability to defeat Bent.

And the moral effect it would have would do much to aid him in his work in Golden City.

"He's a dirty coward," yelled Bent. "He's a cussed Yankee an' fights with his fists. I'll cut his ears off."

"Hold on!" cried the old detective, in a voice of thunder.

Silence fell upon the room.

"You have challenged me to a duel with the bowie," said the old detective.

"Yas," growled Bent.

"I accept the challenge if some one in the room will lend me a bowie."

A dozen men eagerly offered their knives. Old King Brady selected one.

Bent secured his from the ceiling. Then arrangements for the duel were made.

Harry was Old King Brady's second. A ruffian named Jake Favor was selected by Bent.

Then all adjourned to a spot just outside the hotel, and near a tall pine.

Here the moonlight made all as plain as day. Bent stripped to the waist and Old King Brady did the same.

The two men faced each other. Harry was in an agony of nervous dread.

"Look out for an upward pass," he whispered. "I think that is his game."

"Don't fear, my boy," said Old King Brady, quietly. "I will handle him all right."

The two men walked forward and crossed the knives.

They flashed aloft in the moonlight. Down they came in a terrific parry.

Pass and thrust, and parry followed in quick order. Bent made every effort to get under the detective's guard.

An upward pass into his foe's bowels or stomach and the fight would be over. Nothing is so difficult to parry.

But Old King Brady always stepped back far enough to miss the blade.

Once it slit his waistcoat and brought a gasp from the crowd and a shiver from Harry.

But in that same moment the old detective's blade described a parabola about the head and face of his opponent.

A howl of pain escaped Bent. Some object was flung from the detective's knife blade. Blood surged down the villain's neck.

The left ear had been sliced off as snug and clean as if done with a razor.

A roar went up from the crowd.

Harry drew a breath of relief. He no longer had fear for the result.

He saw that Old King Brady had no idea of killing his foe. He meant to mark him, though.

Smarting with the awful pain and faint with the loss of blood, Bent was less aggressive and more on the defense.

He began to slip back, making weak efforts to get under his opponent's guard.

Suddenly he slipped and fell. Old King Brady bent over him.



The crowd looked for the death stroke, but the old detective said:

"Give me that knife, Bent. Admit that you're beaten, or die."

The cowardly ruffian took the life offered him. He threw down his knife.

"I cave," he whined. "You've got the best of me."

Old King Brady took the villain's bowie and wiped it on the moonlit sword.

Then he pressed the blade on a stone and snapped it. He threw the pieces far away.

"That will never be used against honest men again," he said. "Now, my friends, let's go back to the hotel and have another drink."

All through the duel scene the crowd had remained silent.

Not one among them had even dreamed that the tender-foot stranger would win the fight.

There was a great revulsion of sentiment.

A hoarse murmur went up.

"Hooray fer the tenderfoot!"

"Three cheers fer the new ruler!"

But Old King Brady turned upon them almost fiercely.

"Hold on!" he shouted. "I won't have that. I'm not the new ruler, nor do I intend that any other man shall rule in this town. Every man his own boss. One man has just as many rights as another. That's what I stand for."

There was a dead silence.

The denizens of Golden City, so long used to "bad-man" rule, were puzzled and uncertain.

A tall Mexican, with strange, dark eyes and villainous manner, stepped forward.

"Pardon, Senor," he said, with the polite grace of a Spaniard. "But you must not forget that where there are communities, there must be leaders."

The old detective saw that here was a man of education and refinement. He spoke with ease and perfect command of words.

But he also saw in him the most dangerous type of villain that could be found.

Old King Brady bowed.

"Such leaders must be the choice of the people," he replied; "not self-established tyrants and murderers."

The Mexican showed his teeth in a dazzling smile.

"That is what you call civilization," he said. "But Senor must remember that we are barbarians."

"Then you need an application of the civilizing influence."

"Ah, then senor is here for that purpose!"

"Not exactly. But while here I'll do all in my power to establish it."

Again the Mexican smiled.

"Senor is blind. He does not see that in forcing a rule upon this community which is unknown and distasteful, he is himself playing the tyrant."

"You are wrong," said Old King Brady. "I seek to establish no rule. I simply am a champion of fair play and

equal rights, and I am the enemy of the dead-shot ruffian who goes about taking the lives of innocent men and with immunity from justice. No honest man's life is safe here."

"That is the consequence of the commingling of so many classes and nationalities in a lawless region."

"Yet, there must be law and order. I stand for that."

"So you declare war on the Dead-Shot Gang?"

"I do."

"My name is Miguel Medina," said the Mexican, with a sweeping bow. "I am one of that gang, and I await the senor's service."

"Oh, you want to fight?"

"This is not the time or place. But forget not, senor, you are on dangerous ground. The rule of the Dead-Shot Gang cannot be broken in Golden City. If you are wise, you will profit by the hint and leave at once."

Miguel Medina stepped back and disappeared in the crowd.

Old King Brady laughed in a contemptuous way.

Then he shouted:

"Here's defiance to the Dead-Shot Gang. All back to the hotel and drinks for the crowd."

There was a faint cheer.

The old detective knew that secretly the miners were all with him.

But they were thoroughly terrorized by the Dead-Shot Gang.

However, the crowd went back to the hotel, and Old King Brady treated them again.

Then the Bradys withdrew to a corner of the barroom for a consultation.

"Well," said Old King Brady. "We have opened the ball, Harry."

"Whew! I should say so. This is a regular hornet's nest."

"That is true."

"I trembled for you in that bowie knife duel."

"Bah! He did not know how to use a knife."

"He must be feeling pretty sore."

"Indeed, yes."

"Let me see! We have got a good line on the gang now."

"Yes."

"Bent is the leader. Flash Pete is a member. Miguel Medina is another, and that Jake Favor is a fourth. Doubtless there are others."

"Very true. Well, we can hold them, I guess."

"I don't know. The odds are a bit heavy."

"We can only overcome that with strategy."

"Just so. In the meantime, shall we look up this man, Dudley Dean?"

"There is a point. Doubtless he is living here under an assumed name. How to locate him is the question. We have only a vague description of him."

"Yes."

"The fact yet remains to be established whether he is in league with the gang or not."



"And whether he was an accomplice of Bent in the Foss murder or a victim."

"That is it."

"We are sure that Bent is the guilty man."

"Yes."

"But we must have evidence to convict. Now, for the present, we can do no better than drop out of sight for a day or two."

## CHAPTER VI.

### IN DISGUISE.

"Eh?" exclaimed Harry. "Drop out of sight, did you say?"

"Yes."

"Well, where shall we go?"

"Stay right here."

This anomalous statement for a moment puzzled the young detective. Then he exclaimed:

"Oh, I see! Drop into disguise."

"Just so."

"That is capital. We can work to great advantage."

"So we can."

"Of course, we would be in great danger to live here openly for awhile. We would almost surely get a bullet in the dark."

"Yes, that gang are capable of almost anything."

"So they are."

The plan of the detectives certainly seemed the wisest and most feasible.

They at once adopted it.

Old King Brady went upstairs and secured some materials, from which he constructed a placard and placed it on the door of the room.

"To Inquiring Friends: We are out of town for a day or two. Kindly wait for our return."

Then the detectives perfected their make-ups.

They were skilful beyond expression.

Old King Brady made up as a stoop-shouldered Indian half-breed, staining his face a dirty brown.

He adopted the name of "Wapsie Joe."

Harry became a Mexican cowboy, Jose Sebastian. The outfits had been secured by the Bradys in Denver.

The wilds of Idaho never produced two more typical characters than Wapsie Joe and Jose Sebastian.

They slipped unnoticed out of the hotel by a rear way.

In the darkness they made their way to a retired spot in the hills and camped for the night.

The next morning they leisurely walked down into Golden City.

They attracted scarcely any attention.

There were so many of their stamp hanging about the place that this was not strange.

When they entered the hotel, they saw excited knots of men on all sides.

The one topic of conversation was the bowie knife duel of the night before, and the mystery of the two men from the East.

"I reckon they know whar their bread is buttered," said a weazen-faced miner. "They've got out of here in good season."

"You bet!"

"If they hed stayed the gang would have winged 'em."

"That's what."

The Bradys looked at each other and smiled. Just then there was a clatter of hoofs outside and a great uproar.

A miner sprang into the place.

"Come on, citizens!" he cried. "Them champion rastlers from Beaver Run hev come to town an' they hev a challenge out fer ther best rastlers in Golden City."

It is hardly necessary to say that the excitement created was most intense.

The whole town was soon in an uproar.

A party of a dozen husky rustlers from a distant camp had come into town on their ponies.

A challenge had been sent them to meet the best men of Golden City in a wrestling and boxing contest.

There was a lively welcome given the Beaver Run athletes.

They were at once carried to the bar for drinks, and then Ike Bent appeared on the scene.

He at once took charge of the programme.

During the morning preparations were made for the event. The Golden City people entered a rude amphitheatre in the centre of the town, where all could gather and witness the bouts.

There was a large ring very securely roped off for the wrestling and boxing.

Big Ike had charge of all arrangements and proved a good manager.

The Golden City men were selected to meet the Beaver Run champions according to their known abilities.

Bent was a wrestler and a boxer himself, indeed, was reckoned the champion slugger of the place.

So he was entered as the one to meet the final winner.

The Bradys, it is hardly necessary to say, were deeply interested.

They watched the progress of events very closely.

Flash Pete and the other members of the Dead-Shot Gang were also present.

At three o'clock all was ready.

The enclosure was packed with the excited denizens of Golden City.

Betting on the result was prolific. The miners wagered even the shirts on their backs.

Finally the first contest was announced.

It was to be a wrestling contest between Bill Palmer, of Golden City and Jack Mason, of Beaver Run.

Both were stout specimens of manhood, with the necessary back and shoulder muscles to make good wrestlers.

There was little attention paid to rules.

It was catch-as-catch-can and no holds barred. Any stratagem was legal.



The two men came together like young bulls.

They closed and began a long, sanguinary struggle. Once Mason got a grapevine, but Palmer broke it and got a half-Nelson.

It looked for a time as if Palmer would win.

But suddenly his long, sinewy arm slipped. Like a snake the Beaver Run man's arm went up across his chest and locked over the shoulder and across the other's throat.

"Strangle hold!" yelled the crowd.

It did the business.

Choked half into insensibility, Palmer's muscular frame slowly gave way.

Down he went with a crash, and was pinned to the ground by his more tricky opponent. Mason was declared the winner.

A great yell of triumph and delight went up from the Beaver Run men.

The Golden City crowd were much discomfited. They were obliged to pay some heavy bets.

Palmer was furious and wanted another try.

But the rules forbade this, and he was obliged to retire a defeated man. The Golden City athletes had lost the first point.

The next contest was one of skill with the gloves.

A Beaver Run boxer named Glendon came into the ring and challenged the best man in Golden City.

It was Jake Favor who now answered this.

He came forward and accepted the challenge. The Golden City people yelled.

Glendon was rather a light-built man, with a quick, nervous manner. But he was extremely sinewy.

Favor was a short, thick-set fellow, with square shoulders, enormous breadth of chest and heavy fists.

At a glance one would have reckoned him easily the best man of the two.

But a close observer would have noted many points in favor of the other man.

Glendon was lightning quick, and could strike a hard blow. Favor was an ox on a steady test of strength, but slow and muscle bound.

Old King Brady whispered to Harry:

"It is two to one the little fellow will eat him up."

"So I think," agreed the young detective. "Unless they come to close quarters."

"That will never happen."

The seconds selected for the two boxers quickly made arrangements. Bent was named as referee.

The men stripped to the waist, and came up for the first round.

"Give him a knockout, Glendon!"

"Uppercut him, Jake!"

"Don't wait too long!"

The two men fiddled a moment, and then Glendon led for Favor's nose. A quick, sharp blow brought the blood from it.

With a mad cry Favor rushed. He made wild swings at his man.

Any one of these might have put Glendon down and out.

But they never reached him. With the greatest of ease he stepped back out of reach, while he shot in a number of stinging blows, which found their mark every time. Favor began to bleed copiously.

The crowd was insane with excitement. It was with difficulty that the lawless element were kept from breaking into the ring.

Four fast rounds were fought. Favor was gasping and weak from his exertions.

Glendon was cool and calm, and completely unruffled. He even smiled as he went to his corner.

When the men were called up for the fifth round, Glendon, for the first time, took the aggressive.

He rushed the fighting at all stages and set so hot a pace that he soon had Favor helpless.

A knockout would have surely followed, but Favor's seconds threw up the sponge. The battle was over.

Golden City was disgruntled. The Beaver Run people were elated. The seconds of Glendon issued a challenge to any man in Golden City.

Harry turned to Old King Brady.

"I believe here is a chance to gain a point," he said. "I am going to take that challenge."

The old detective hesitated. Then he saw the point.

"You are right," he agreed. "You ought to outpoint him easily, Harry. Don't let him thrash you."

"He shall if he can," laughed the young detective. "I am by no means sure."

Then he leaped into the ring.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE WRESTLING MATCH.

As Jose Sebastian, the Mexican cowboy, Young King Brady astonished the crowd by leaping into the ring.

The Mexicans were known to be singularly deficient in their knowledge of the manly art.

So the crowd yelled:

"Look at the Greaser!"

"Put him up for a target!"

"He's a wonder!"

But, for all this, Harry seemed to be the only challenger.

"Per Dios!" he cried. "You men of Golden City make mock of me. But I am to uphold the honor of the town. If I win, you shall not laugh."

This speech made a furore. The din was deafening. He was cheered and then jeered.

But the seconds arranged for the fight.

Glendon grinned as he saw what he was up against.

It seemed like an easy victory, and he flourished his gloves and made a pass at Harry. The young detective easily turned it aside and retaliated with a light tap on the jaw.



Surprised at being so easily reached, Glendon made a couple of lightning passes for Harry's head.

But the young detective simply moved his head aside and dodged them. Then he ran in to close quarters.

The infighting was, for a moment, of the fiercest and liveliest description.

But Harry came out unscathed, while Glendon was groggy.

"Hurrah for the Greaser!"

"The cowboy wins!"

"Knock him out, Mexico!"

Maddened, the Beaver Run boxer tried to crush his antagonist with the fiercest of blows. Harry evaded his attack, and getting an opening, whipped a terrific uppercut to the jaw.

Glendon went down like a flash and was counted out.

Harry threw down his gloves and modestly sought to retire. But the Golden City denizens were frantic, and fairly carried him on their shoulders out of the ring.

But Beaver Run yet had the best of the contest.

They had won two points to the one of Golden City.

Glendon had quickly revived, and a little later appeared at Harry's side in the crowd.

He held out his hand.

"I say, Greaser, you can fight," he said, frankly. "I saw at once that I was out of it."

"Indeed, I was not sure of the contest at any point," said Harry, modestly.

"To tell the truth," said Glendon, in a low tone. "I was so sorry to be knocked out so early in the game."

"Ah!" said Harry, with interest.

"Yes. I wanted to stay in to the finish, so that they would put that Big Ike Bent up against me. I have a grudge against him. I'll tell you about it later."

Glendon dropped out of sight in the crowd. But his words made an odd impression on Harry.

However, Beaver Run now put a new champion into the ring.

He was named Dan Peterson. He was a powerfully built man, but the Golden City crowd jeered him on account of his age and his long gray whiskers.

However, Peterson pulled off his coat and challenged the Golden City men.

"Oh, I've rastled a bit in my day," he declared. "Varmount has turned out some pooty good rastlers. I reckon I kin hold my own if I am old."

One of the Golden City athletes came out to vanquish the old man.

Peterson downed him so quick that the crowd were startled.

Another powerful fellow tried the old Vermonter.

He was pinned to the ground in one minute and forty seconds. The Golden City contingent were dazed.

Beaver Run was now a point ahead. Peterson's friends wildly cheered him.

This sort of thing would never do, so the Golden City men began to cast about for a new champion.

There seemed no one but Big Ike Bent.

The giant ruler of Golden City came stalking into the ring. He glared at Peterson.

It was apparent that he knew the Vermonter, for he said:

"Wall, Peterson, how's things up on your range? Is yer horned stock doin' well?"

"As well as I could expect, barrin' cattle thieves," said Peterson, in a significant way.

"Ah!" sneered Bent. "Ye ain't caught the chaps that put a second brand on yer steers?"

"I reckon they ain't far away."

"Humph! If ye can't rastle any better than ye farm, I reckon I'll make dough out of ye."

"I'm willin' to take chances," said the Vermonter, coolly.

"So ye're willin' to rastle me?"

"I don't believe ye're any better than lots of others I've met."

"Don't ye?" said Ike, with an evil glitter of the eyes.

"Wall, maybe ye'll change yer mind in a minute or two."

"Mebbe I will, but I don't believe it."

The two men faced each other. The crowd were deeply interested. There was a dead silence.

The Bradys watched the affair with deep interest.

Suddenly Harry felt a touch on his arm.

"I say, Mexico, I'll lay you two to one the old man throws him."

Harry looked up into the face of his late antagonist, Glendon. The latter was somewhat excited.

"Bent is a big man," he said.

"I don't care if he is," said Glendon. "The old man will toss him. Will you take me?"

"I don't care to bet."

"All right."

Glendon strode away. The two contestants faced each other in the ring.

The detectives now saw that clouds were forming on the horizon of this affair. Flash Pete, Medina and Favor, of the Dead-Shot Gang, were circulating among the miners, and once Old King Brady heard the words:

"Win, fair or foul."

"Harry," he said, in an undertone. "There's going to be trouble."

"I think so."

"Mark my word, there'll be shooting here in a jiffy if Bent don't win that bout."

The detectives felt sure of this. They had no desire to get into the mess, so they drew away a little distance and watched proceedings.

The Beaver Run men were backing Peterson to a standstill.

The Golden City men, with the advantage of being on their own heath, were taking the odds freely.

Suddenly the Bradys saw Glendon approaching them. There was a troubled expression on his face.

"Gents," he said. "I reckon there'll be fair play?"

"We have no voice here," said Old King Brady. "We are outsiders."



Glendon looked surprised.

"You don't belong in this place?"

"No."

"I wouldn't have fought ye if I'd known that."

"Oh, that's all right. It was only a friendly bout."

"As far as I'm concerned, it was," declared Glendon.

"The same here," said Harry. "But, really, I'm afraid there is going to be trouble if your man wins."

Glendon's eyes met those of the two detectives.

"There you are," he said. "I've told all my boys the same thing, and they won't take the warning."

"I think we will keep out of the affair."

"Same here, only I've got to see fair play for Peterson. He is my best friend. Ah, if they dare to play any snide game the Beaver Run people will come down here and wipe Golden City off the earth."

"There doesn't seem to be the very best of feeling," said Harry.

"Well, you bet not! The Golden City people are ruled by a Dead-Shot Gang. In Beaver Run, one man is just as good as another. I wouldn't live down here. But I'm down here for a purpose. I've an account to settle with Big Ike."

"Has he done you harm?"

Glendon looked searchingly at the Bradys.

"I dunno," he said, "but there's something about you people makes me think I could trust you. Dang it! Ye look honest."

Both detectives smiled.

"Well, we are honest men as far as can be," said Old King Brady. "You need not fear to trust us."

A curious light shone in the other's eyes.

"I can't make ye out," he said. "Half-breeds and Mexicans don't use such good language."

The detectives shot startled glances at each other.

They saw at once that Glendon had penetrated their disguise. Had others done the same?

"Look here, friend," said Old King Brady, sternly. "It will serve you nothing to misrepresent us. We are what we seem. Do you see?"

Glendon nodded and said:

"I understand. Don't be afraid of me. I'm a little on that line myself."

Glendon spoke significantly. The detectives were instantly interested, and would have sought an explanation, but at that moment the wrestling contest began.

Big Ike got the grip on the big farmer, and for a moment seemed to have the advantage.

The Golden City contingent yelled with hoarse delight.

They felt sure of victory. But the next moment the tables were turned.

Peterson secured a hip hold. There was a terrific straining of muscles, and Big Ike went over like a rock from a catapult.

He fell flat on his back, and Peterson pinned him to the ground. Instantly the Golden City sharps raised a great cry:

"Foul! Disqualify him! Give the match to Ike!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE DETECTIVES MAKE A DISCOVERY.

There had been no foul, as everybody could see.

But the cry had been raised by the Dead-Shot Gang with a purpose. It bore fruit.

Of course, the Beaver Run men protested. They demanded their wagers, and were refused.

A turbulent scene followed, until a yell went up:

"Clean 'em out! Down with the Beaver Run cheats!"

The next moment pandemonium reigned.

Hot blood succeeded, and instantly revolvers were drawn. A Golden City man fired the first shot.

It was the signal for a terrible and bloody battle.

Shots flew in all directions. The crowd scattered.

The Beaver Run men sought the shelter of a gulch near. The Golden City men fell back behind their cabins.

The fusilade was long and deadly. Half a dozen men lost their lives.

Then the Beaver Run men were driven back into the hills. The detectives tried to keep aloof, but were forced to fall back themselves into a clump of pines far up on the mountain.

Peterson had stood in the greatest peril when the trouble began.

Some of the crazed miners tried to get at him. But he was able to slip out of the ring and was met by Glendon.

They overtook the Bradys, who were also fleeing from the scene.

So it happened that all four were in the shelter of the pines when the wave of battle diverged and went off at right angles, leaving them safe.

"Well, Oscar," said Peterson, with his Yankee drawl. "I tossed Big Ike easy enough."

"You're right, Dan," cried Glendon. "I wish I had been the one to do it."

"You'll git under him some day."

"You bet I will."

"It must be that Bent has done you some wrong," said Old King Brady.

"The worst wrong one man could do another," declared Glendon. "I told ye that I would tell ye all about it."

"Oscar has a right to kill that cuss on sight," said Peterson.

"I don't want to kill him. I want to bring him to the law and clear my own good name," said Glendon.

At this assertion, the two detectives were startled.

"Is that the way of it?" exclaimed Old King Brady. "We know of such a charge against Bent."

Glendon looked up sharply.

"Ye do?"

"Yes."

"Who was the victim?"

"His name was Dudley Dean!"

A sharp gasp escaped Glendon, and his face turned dead.



ly pale. He started back, and his hand instinctively sought his revolver.

"Eh?" he demanded, fiercely. "What do you know about Dudley Dean?"

"He stands accused of the murder of a man named Foss, his employer in New York City, some time ago."

Glendon trembled like an aspen. His eyes burned like live coals as he faced the detectives.

"Tell me who you are?" he said, tensely. "I'm not to be fooled. You are no Mexican nor half-breed."

"Well, you are right," said Old King Brady, quietly. "We are nothing of the kind. We are New York detectives."

Glendon drew a breath like a drowning man.

"I knew it," he declared. "What are you here for?"

"We are after Dudley Dean."

"Well, you'll never get him alive. What is more, he is not guilty of that charge."

"The evidence is against him."

"That may be. But he is innocent just the same."

"Do you know him?"

"I know him well."

Old King Brady modulated his voice.

"Look here, my friend," he said, quietly. "Don't make any mistake. We are just men, and travel on the square. Neither of us believes Dudley Dean to be guilty."

Glendon's face cleared as by magic.

"You don't?" he cried, eagerly.

"No, we do not. We are sure that Bent is the murderer."

"Well, you are right," cried Glendon, eagerly. "That is the truth. It was a foul wrong. Dean was held a prisoner while that fearful thing was done, and things so arranged that the guilt might be placed on him."

"If Dean was innocent, why did he flee?"

"That is easy enough to see. It is a hard thing to disprove. He might have been convicted and hanged before the truth came out. He is a fugitive seeking the proof of his own innocence."

Old King Brady held out his hand.

"Dean," he said, "I know you. What is the use of beating about the bush? We believe you innocent and we are going to help you all we can to prove it."

The effect of this upon the fugitive from justice was powerful. His eyes swam with tears.

"Ah!" he cried. "I am sure you are my friends. Mr. Peterson, here, has stood by me faithfully. I have been long on Ike Bent's trail, trying to get a chance to corner him and force a confession from him. But he seems to outwit me."

"He shall not do so long. We are with you to the end."

"And you will not put me under arrest?"

"By no means. We want the real criminal."

"Oh, you will get your reward," cried Dean, with emotion.

"But—you have not given me your names?"

"Brady!"

"What? Are you the two Bradys, New York's greatest detectives?"

"We are very humble exponents of that profession."

"I have known of your fame many years. So I am to

have your assistance. Ah, my good friend, Peterson, the future looks bright."

"By gum! I hope ye'll win out," said the big farmer. "I've got it in fer Big Ike's gang. Them rustlers air the ones that changed the brand on so many of my cattle an' run 'em off."

"Did they do that?" asked Old King Brady, with interest.

"Wall, you bet."

"We will break up that gang or die," cried Harry. "Have you good men in Beaver Run?"

"Some of the squarest men in Idaho," declared Peterson.

"Then I would suggest that we go thither at once and organize them. We must make common cause against the Dead-Shot Gang."

"That's what!"

"There are good men in Golden City. But they don't dare to speak their minds."

"That's jest it!"

"Now, if we can lock up and make an example of a few of the Dead-Shot Gang, we can turn the tide. Once it is turned, Big Ike's death warrant is sealed."

"All I want from him is my vindication," cried Dean.

"And you shall have it," declared Old King Brady. "I think we understand each other."

"Yes."

"Very good. Now, we shall be pleased to accompany you to Beaver Run and organize a powerful body of men to go down to Golden City."

"Hooray!" cried Peterson. "My hosses an' schooner air up in Big Cut. We'll jest soger up thar and hitch up an' drive home."

"We came down on wheels," explained Dean. "We left the outfit up in the Cut for safety."

"Capital!" cried Old King Brady. "How far is it to Beaver Run?"

"Twenty miles."

"Then we ought to get there by sunset?"

"With ease," declared Dean. "We can seem to do no good here. Ah! do you see that?"

From their position they could look down into the streets of Golden City.

And as they did so, they saw a troop of mounted men swing out from behind the hotel. Big Ike rode at their head.

"They're going to give chase," declared Peterson. "Come on, friends! Ther sooner we git under way the better."

Peterson led the way.

The detectives and Dean followed him. It was a hard climb over the mountain side.

But finally they reached the little pocket in the hills where the farmer's team of mules was corralled.

It did not take long to hitch them up.

Then the Bradys and Dean crawled into the big schooner and found comfortable seats on a heap of blankets.

Peterson occupied the driver's seat, and swinging his whip, sent the mule team ahead at full speed.

The schooner bumped and rocked over the rough trail.



Soon, however, they reached the long valley between the hills, where the road was soft and smooth.

For a couple of miles they kept on this.

Suddenly Peterson raised his whip and began frantically flogging the mules.

"Thar's the pesky varmints," he yelled. "They're comin' down onto us."

The detectives and Dean peered under the flap of the schooner. As they did so bullets sang through the top of the vehicle.

It required but a glance for them to see their peril.

A body of horsemen were pouring down from a ridge to intercept them on the trail.

"It's Big Ike!" gasped Dean. "He has cut us off!"

"Not if we kin reach the Gap!" cried Peterson.

Down came the gang of outlaws.

"It's fight or die," said Old King Brady. "Get your firearms ready."

A rifle lay in the bottom of the wagon. Old King Brady seized this and Harry and Dean drew their pistols.

## CHAPTER IX.

### FIGHTING THE RED MEN.

On rushed the schooner, Peterson fearlessly laying on the whip.

The Dead-Shot Gang were now in hailing distance.

"Ready!" said Old King Brady. "If they try to stop us, fire!"

Big Ike pulled up his horse. He seemed to give orders to his men. The schooner was now opposite them.

"Hold on thar, Peterson!" yelled Big Ike. Up went the flap of the schooner, and Old and Young King Brady opened fire.

It was the best move the fugitives could have made.

The saddles began to empty, and for a moment Big Ike's party was thrown into confusion.

Every moment the schooner drew nearer the Gap.

Big Ike was furious.

"After 'em!" he yelled. "Curse 'em! We won't leave a grease spot of 'em!"

The outlaw gang closed in behind. The bullets flew thick and fast.

It was miraculous that none in the schooner were hit.

The canvas was riddled. Peterson's hat was shot from his head, and a part of his fringe of beard shot away.

Harry got a bullet through his coat, and Dean had his pistol shot from his hand.

But the fugitives kept up such an accurate fire that the pursuers were soon glad to drop behind out of range.

"Hooray!" yelled Peterson. "We've licked 'em out an' out."

"It's our victory," cried Dean. "I tell you, they got enough that time."

"We'll go down to Beaver Run and bring up a gang big enough to wipe the Dead-Shot Gang off the earth," declared Peterson.

The walls of the pass now loomed up near at hand.

Once safe within them, they might bid defiance to the foe.

But just then Old King Brady's keen eye caught sight of an object in the mouth of the pass.

It was a mere black speck, but a closer look caused the old detective to give an exclamation.

"On my word," he muttered, "it is a man."

At the same moment other figures appeared, all mounted.

"Hold on!" cried the old detective. "Is it friend or foe ahead of us?"

With a gasp Peterson pulled up the mules.

He shaded his eyes and stared at the distant body of horsemen. Then he looked anxiously to the right and left.

"Humph!" he muttered. "That's bad. We're trapped."

"What's that, Dan?" cried Dean. "What's the matter?"

The farmer jerked his thumb in the direction of the pass.

"Matter enough," he growled.

"Jupiter!" exclaimed Dean. "They've headed us off."

"No, they hain't," said Peterson.

"What? Isn't that part of the Golden City gang in the pass?"

"No, sir."

"Who are they, then?"

"Injuns!"

This astonishing statement created a sensation. Dean and the detectives looked at each other.

"Indians?"

"Yas, that's what. An' if they git hold of us, we'd better be in ther hands of Big Ike."

"Heavens!" ejaculated Dean. "I have heard that the Assiniboines are on the warpath. We are between two fires."

"We won't be fer long," said Peterson.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, them ere Injuns will skeer Big Ike an' his gang outen their senses. They'll go back to Golden City in hot haste, you bet."

Looking back, it was seen that this was true.

Big Ike and his men were in hasty retreat.

"Well," said Dean. "What are we going to do?"

Farmer Peterson shaded his keen eyes with his hand.

"Thar's two dozen of 'em," he said. "They'll show fight. Thar's no way but to hold 'em off."

"Can we do it?"

"I dunno. We kin try."

The little party looked to their firearms. It seemed that a fight was unavoidable.

The result could only be guessed. To retreat, it would be necessary to leave the schooner and horses.

And to do this would be to abandon the citadel. The schooner furnished to some extent a place of refuge and safety.

The Indians had come down out of the pass in a spreading line.



They galloped easily over the level space and seemed to contemplate surrounding the schooner.

To them it was a lawful prize. They were the pirates of the plains.

Our adventurers crouched in the bottom of the wagon and waited.

Cautiously the red warriors circled about the schooner.

They kept just out of safe range. The Indian is a bush fighter and seldom exposes himself in the open.

"Consarn 'em!" cried Peterson. "I wish they would come nearer, so that I could get a line on 'em."

"I think I can pink that one out there," said Dean.

He aimed at a redskin who was riding in a circle with his leg over his horse's flank and thus keeping out of sight.

Dean pulled the trigger.

The pony leaped in the air and fell, carrying the rider down under him.

It was a good shot.

"I thought so," cried Dean, exultantly. "They forget a Winchester can send a bullet through horse and all."

"That's all right," declared Old King Brady. "I only wish we had another rifle."

The savages themselves now opened fire on the schooner.

While no harm was done the occupants personally, a great misfortune was the result, for both mules were shot dead.

Peterson was furious.

"Consarn their pesky hides!" he gritted. "I'll have their hearts fer that. They've killed my best pair of mules. Durn me, but I kain't see what they made Injuns fer, anyway."

The others laughed at this.

Peterson now began to fire at the Indians, with little effect, however.

After a long while, the red wretches withdrew to a knoll and held council.

It was certain that they did not dare to attack the schooner openly.

They realized that there were dead shots in the vehicle and that to charge upon them would mean the loss of many of their braves.

The day was drawing to a close.

It was the same old Indian trick of waiting for darkness.

It was their hope to accomplish by stealth what they dared not try by open hand.

So, presently, they sent up a defiant war whoop, and rode out of sight—behind the knoll.

Our adventurers were not to be deceived, however.

They knew that the red men had by no means abandoned the game.

It was only a subterfuge. But no further demonstration from them need be feared while daylight lasted.

"Confound it," growled Peterson. "We are going to have a dirty time of it with these skunks."

"Is there no plan for escape?" asked Harry.

"Yes," said Old King Brady.

The others looked at him.

"How?" asked Dean.

The old detective scanned the plain.

"It will require nerve and careful work," he said. "But I think we can do it."

"I'd like ter know how," said Peterson, roughly.

"Well, I'll show you. Do you notice that ten yards from our trail there is a sort of furrow or deep depression, which extends clear to the banks of that creek yonder?"

"Yas."

"Well, that's a buffalo wallow."

"That's right."

"When buffalos were plenty hereabout, they made that depressed path going to water."

"That's right," declared Peterson. "But, what has that got to do with our escape?"

"That is what I am about to tell you. If we can manage to reach that depression we might lie concealed in it."

"Well?"

"By careful work we ought to crawl down as far as the creek. In the shadows of the evening we could slip down in the water and make our way down stream for some way by swimming."

There was a moment of silence.

Peterson studied the distant depression for a few moments. Then he said:

"Ye're right. They can't see into that wallow from any direction. We kin certainly do it."

At once, hope seized upon all. Very carefully calculations were made.

There was much to consider.

The creek ran north and entered a pass in the hills. The savages were on the south side.

It was hardly likely that they would try to encompass the fugitives until they could safely do so after dark.

The chief danger was in getting to the wallow. But this might be done by using the schooner as a screen.

"We can get under ther schooner an' push it along as far as the wallow," said Peterson. "Then it oughter be dead easy."

"Right!" cried Old King Brady. "That is our best plan."

A board was knocked out of the wagon floor, and the fugitives dropped down under the wagon.

## CHAPTER X.

### OUT OF THE JAWS OF DEATH.

Nothing could be seen of the savages.

But that lynx eyes were constantly fixed on the vehicle the party did not doubt.

So they moved with caution.

The running gear of the wagon screened them somewhat. Lying flat, Peterson crept forward and cut the harness of the dead mules.

The wagon was now ready to be moved.

Applying their strength to the wheels, the adventurers pushed the wagon back.



This movement at once attracted the attention of the savages.

Some of them appeared on the knoll and a few shots were fired.

But they were answered so hotly that they again retired.

The wagon was heavy, and was moved but slowly.

But after awhile it was pushed up to the depression. Then the fugitives lay down and rested.

Gradually the dusk of evening crept over the country. Soon the knoll was indistinct.

And yet, for all sight or sound, not an Indian might be within many miles.

There was no desire to make a false move.

So they waited until perfectly sure that the coast was clear.

Then Peterson crawled snake-like into the wallow.

He crept away in the gloom. In a moment Old King Brady followed him.

Harry went next, and Dean last. Slowly they crept on through the deep wallow.

It was not long before the swish of waters was heard. They were nearing the creek.

And then the dull patter of hoofs was heard far to the north. It was plain that part of the savages were circling in that direction to surround them.

"That's all right," whispered Old King Brady. "We'll break through their line easy enough, without their being aware of it."

Without fear now they crept on until the wallow ended at the creek.

The banks were high, and in many places screened by high alder bushes.

Slipping into the water, which was up to their armpits, one after another, they slowly felt their way along under the overhanging bank.

It was slow work.

But they knew that freedom was at the end of it.

So they kept on.

It seemed hours that they were in the chill waters of the creek. In reality, it was not more than one hour.

But they had crept almost to the base of the hills. The creek entered a gorge.

Then suddenly all crouched under a high bank. The thud of horses' feet came to their ears.

The next moment, outlined against the sky on the opposite bank, they saw a number of Indian ponies.

They were slowly passing. In a few moments they were gone.

"Hooray!" whispered Peterson. "We've got 'em beat. We're beyond their line."

"That is true!" agreed Old King Brady. "Now, let us seek hiding in the hills."

In a few moments they were climbing the rough walls of the pass.

They were safe.

A dismayed whoop from the plain below told of the rage and discomfiture of the baffled redskins.

"All right, Injuns," cried Peterson. "We've give ye the slip, and we're mighty glad of it."

"Now for Beaver Run," cried Dean.

"And the Vigilants."

"Yes."

"We will see what can be done with the Dead-Shot Gang."

For hours they pushed on over a mountain trail.

When daybreak came they were threading the dark recesses of a mighty forest of pine.

Emerging from this they beheld a long, fertile, green valley.

Here, the Beaver Run settlers had fine farms and herded stock. There were few miners in Beaver Run.

It was in the main a law-abiding place and quite in contrast with Golden City.

The fugitives made their way down into the little town.

Many of the party of athletes were also returning from Golden City. There was a great crowd in the streets of the town.

The reports from Golden City had greatly excited the people.

The Beaver Run farmers were very angry at the treatment their men had received.

The feeling against Big Ike and his crew was very bitter.

Peterson took the stump and harangued his fellow townsmen. The Bradys listened with interest.

"I tell ye, the hull gang oughter be wiped out," cried big Dan. "Thet skunk, Ike Bent, is the wust reptile in this kentry. Golden City people want ter git rid of him and can't."

It scarcely needed the eloquence of Peterson to set the ball rolling.

Beaver Run people were only too ready to take up the gage.

It began to look like civil war. Old King Brady saw at once that this would not do.

Unless something was done to ensure moderation, there would be bloodshed.

"This must not go on, Harry," he said.

"Eh?" exclaimed the young detective. "What can be done to help it?"

"We must stop it."

"I don't see how."

"Well, we must try."

The old detective turned to Dean, and said:

"I say, Dean, there will be serious results if this sort of thing is allowed."

"What do you mean?" asked Dean, in surprise.

"There will be terrible bloodshed if you go down to Golden City in such a manner."

"Why, I supposed you were all in for giving that gang a death blow."

"You mean the Dead-Shot Gang?"

"Yes."

"Well, so I am," agreed the old detective. "But I don't want to see innocent people slaughtered. The majority of



the people in Golden City are not in sympathy with Bent and his crew."

"Why don't they wipe him out, then?"

"For the reason that they have no organization."

"Well, we will give them one."

"Not by going down there in such an aggressive way. They will construe it as an attack upon them."

"Well, it's not. We simply want to wipe out Bent and his men."

"That is it. But you don't want to wipe out the honest miners of Golden City."

"Of course not."

"Then, you are going at the work altogether wrong. Get up there and tell the people so."

Dean saw the truth of this.

"I never thought of that," he said. "Of course, you are right. But what other plan is there?"

"A very simple one."

"Well, what?"

"Send some emissaries down to Golden City and get the sympathy of the best miners. Then pick a score of good men to go down and make the Dead-Shot Gang give up their arms."

Dean was thoughtful.

When Peterson was through with his speech-making, Dean and the detectives drew him aside.

They stated the case to him.

"That's right," agreed the farmer. "It didn't occur to me before. I see the point. Of course, I don't mean ter do up the miners in Golden City."

"Unless they are made to understand that, however, there will be a terrible misunderstanding."

"Why, we're countin' on their standin' in with us."

"That's it. But unless you let them know about it, the gang will make them think it's an attack on the town."

"Thet's right. But how are we goin' to work that?"

Old King Brady knit his brows.

"That's the question," he said.

"You see," said Dean. "If we send men down there the gang will lay for them."

"If the better class of miners, however, knew our real purpose, we could feel sure of their co-operation."

"Oh, yes."

"I have a plan," cried Harry.

"What?"

"Let one of us steal down there in the night and post the town, warning the miners against Bent and asking them to co-operate with us against him."

Light broke across Peterson's face.

"By gum! That's the way ter do it!" he cried. "I tell ye, that will put 'em all on their guard."

"That's right," cried Dean. "I'll post the notices this very night."

"Capital!" cried Old King Brady. "But somebody must counsel these people to use moderation."

Peterson leaped upon the stump again.

He addressed the Beaver Run men, and told them the true state of affairs.

"Hold yerselves ready," he said. "We'll find a way ter bring the enemy to terms."

So the matter was arranged.

That night Dean left Beaver Run on a fleet pony.

He returned the next morning. When the denizens of Golden City got up with the sun they were treated to a surprise.

It created a sensation in the town.

On every tree and door post the flaming notice, written out in clever terms by Harry and Old King Brady, was posted.

## CHAPTER XI.

### WAPSIE JOE TURNS THE TIDE.

Big Ike himself found the following pinned to his shanty door:

"To the Men of Golden City. Take Notice: Whereas, the rule of the Dead-Shot Gang has become distasteful to the people of the State of Idaho, and against the laws of a Free Country, Equal Rights are demanded. All honest men in Golden City are warned against the Dead-Shot Gang, and the Vigilants of Beaver Run will co-operate with the men of Golden City to rid our beautiful hills of these devils in human shape. Let the Gang take warning.

(Signed) THE AVENGERS."

Big Ike read the notice and then, with deadly aim, ejected a full gill of tobacco juice over it.

"Thet's what I'll do to every durned one on 'em," he said. "If ther Beaver Run jays want to fight we'll give 'em fight."

"That's a clever idea," said Miguel Medina. "We should go up there and carry the war into the enemy's own country."

Big Ike gave a start.

The idea impressed him favorably. He tightened his thin lips.

"Wipe Beaver Run off ther map," said Flash Pete. "Thet's what ter do."

Big Ike gave his mustache a stroke.

"I don't see nuthin' the matter with that plan," he said. "By the eternal, we'll do it."

It did not take the schemers long to formulate a plan.

Favor was a good hand with the brush, and soon had produced a number of placards, which were worded as follows:

"To the Citizens of Golden City: We are proud of our Rights and Privileges in this State, and owe no allegiance to such a hump-backed community as Beaver Run. We have tolerated their obnoxious proximity in the past out of pure



generosity of spirit. But the hour has come when they see fit to try to dictate to us what our laws and lights shall be. Therefore, we call upon all good men and true in Golden City to meet on the public square this evening at eight and hold an Indignation Meeting of Protest against the Free Hand of Beaver Run. If its Vigilants dare to show their heads in Golden City we are cowards and poltroons if we do not Strike for Human Rights, even at the expense of wiping Beaver Run off the map of Idaho. (Signed)

"THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS."

When this notice was plastered over and above those from Beaver Run, the people of Golden City read and grew excited.

The platitudes of the Dead-Shot Gang were exceedingly potent.

Once again the cunning of Big Ike carried the day.

A tremendous sensation was created. When evening came the Golden City miners came from every direction.

They were harangued and importuned and threatened by Big Ike and his henchmen until they were convinced that they were the victims of a cabal at Beaver Run.

"Shall it be the survival of the fittest?" thundered Bent. "Or shall we submit to the yoke of Beaver Run. I tell you, they are jealous of our prosperity, of our beautiful city, and they mean to wipe us out of existence.

"We are fools to submit. When our town is despoiled and our necks in the halter, it will be too late."

"Hooray! Hooray!" yelled the crowd. "Down with Beaver Run."

"It is my spirit to counsel moderation," continued Bent. "But it is sheer folly to wait for doom when by one stroke it may be averted. We can only regard Beaver Run as a rival and a foe. It is lawful to take advantage of a foe. Shall we wait for them to strike——"

"Strike first!"

"Wipe 'em out!"

"Don't give 'em the start!"

The crowd was wildly excited. It was a critical moment.

But just at that moment, as there was a brief lull, a tall figure came striding through the crowd.

The big half-breed Indian trapper and hunter, who had wrestled with Big Ike, leaped upon the platform beside him.

He folded his arms and looked at Ike with a burning gaze.

Astounded, the villain regarded him with anger and surprise.

"Who are you?" he demanded. "What do you want?"

"You know me," said the halfbreed. "I rastle with you. I am Wapsie Joe."

"Well, curse ye. This is not yer place. Git down!"

But Wapsie Joe's lip curled.

"Big Ike's tongue is forked," he said. "His heart is black."

The crowd stared with amazement and interest. They recognized the big halfbreed who had been so popular at the athletic meet.

There seemed to be a magnetism about him which held them.

Old King Brady, for he it was, had left Beaver Run upon hearing of the proceedings, and with Harry, had come down to Golden City to see what could be done to stem the tide.

It was a surprise to them as well as Dean and Peterson to hear the rumor that the Dead-Shot Gang meant to make war upon Beaver Run and take the initiative.

Big Ike was purple with rage. He seemed about to leap upon Wapsie Joe.

But he had not forgotten his former experience with him. So he showed his teeth and gritted:

"Well, Injun, what have ye got to say?"

Wapsie Joe, with a grim smile, pointed to the mountains.

"My friends live there," he said. "You are trying to kill them. Your heart is black."

"Oh, ye're a Beaver Run man, eh?" sneered Bent. "I say, boys, here's one of ther dogs. We ought to give 'em an example an' hang him."

A murmur went through the crowd, but Old King Brady turned quick as a flash and held up his hand.

"My white brothers will never hang Wapsie Joe," he cried. "He is the son of Watchenohee, the friend of the white man. All the red men of the North will avenge."

There was silence.

It was plain that all realized the possible truth of this. Watchenohee, the Blackfoot chief, was a power in that part of Idaho, and to incur his enmity meant the literal wiping out of all those small settlements.

For Watchenohee had power over the Assiniboines and the Utes, and could summon thousands of them.

An Indian war was something to be avoided at any cost.

Big Ike knew this as well as the rest.

So he changed his attitude.

"Oh, don't fear, Joe," he said, in a different tone. "We aren't going to do you any harm. We are not quarreling with you. But you know that those Beaver Run chaps have given us insults enough."

Wapsie Joe folded his arms and looked contemptuously at the villain. Big Ike quailed before that gaze.

"The white man's tongue is forked," said Joe, scathingly. "Every man here knows that he made the quarrel first. The white men must not go to Beaver Run."

Bent's face grew slowly purple with wrath.

"Curse you, for a fool, Joe!" he gritted. "What do you want to interfere in this matter for?"

"The people of Beaver Run are my friends," said the halfbreed, with dignity.

"And do you think we are to give up our plan to please you?"

Wapsie Joe slightly shrugged his shoulders.

"The men of Golden City will not follow you," he said. A hoarse murmur went up from the crowd.

"That's right, Injun!"

"We don't want bloodshed!"

"We'll stay at home!"

The clever trick of Old King Brady had turned the tide. Bent saw this and he gnashed his teeth with impotent fury.



But he was for the moment worsted. He was shrewd enough to see this and act accordingly.

"All right," he cried. "This is no personal matter of mine. I have got business further West. Golden City can take care of itself. About the time the Beaver Run sharps come down here an' tell ye what ter do, ye'll rather wish ye had Big Ike here ter fight yer battles."

"I say, stand by Big Ike!" cried Favor in the crowd.

"So do I!" shouted another voice. There was an attempt at a cheer.

Big Ike's henchmen were doing their best.

But the wave of sentiment was too strong for them.

This was very plain. A low, sullen murmur went up.

Bent saw that his chance was lost. So he stepped down. But in an undertone, he said:

"Curse you, Injun! I'm not done with you!"

"And I'm not done with you, either," said Wapsie Joe, in a significant way.

Bent flashed an inquiring glance at the half-breed. A dark, suspicious light was in his eyes.

But he met only the cold stare of the stoical halfbreed. Old King Brady played his part well.

The crowd began to disperse. The Dead-Shot Gang entered the barroom of the hotel.

The sober-minded miners saw how near they had come to a tragedy, and were glad that it was averted.

In the crowd were men from Beaver Run in disguise.

Among these were Dean and Peterson. They caused messengers to be sent at once to Beaver Run to assure them that the danger of an attack was all over.

Wapsie Joe alone had saved the day. The revulsion of sentiment was complete, and once more Big Ike and his gang found themselves on the wrong side of the fence.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CHICORY BILL.

Old King Brady joined Harry and Dean and Peterson in the crowd. They managed to slip away unobserved.

"That was a big piece of acting you did, Mr. Brady," said Dean, admiringly.

"It jest carried the day," declared Peterson.

"Well, something has to be done," said Old King Brady.

"It's just as well to win on a bluff as any other way."

"That's right."

"What is ther next move?" asked Peterson. "I 'spose ye wanten kinder git some evidence agin that Bent."

"Well," said Harry, "it's just this way: We know that Bent is the man who murdered Arthur Foss in New York City. But we can't prove it. Now, I think this man Flash Pete knows the whole thing. I reckon he can give us the whole story."

"That's what I think," said Dean.

"Kin ye git it out of him in any way?" asked Peterson.

"I know of only one way," said Old King Brady.

"What's that?"

"Knot a rope around his neck and give him the option of hanging or the truth."

"Ye're right," cried Peterson. "Thet would fetch him. He's the doggonedest coward I ever knew."

"If we could make Flash Pete confess and implicate Bent we would have the case dead."

"I think that Favor is also one of Bent's New York pals," said Harry.

"There is no doubt of it," declared Old King Brady.

"We might try him also."

"We will."

"What shall be done?"

"I believe we can decoy those chaps and hold them prisoners somewhere until they confess," said Old King Brady.

"I know jest the place," cried Peterson.

"Where?" asked Dean.

"There is an old mill up hyar in the hills. It's an out-of-the-way place, and we kin keep 'em there until they come to terms."

"That settles it," cried Old King Brady. "We will trap the rascals at once."

"If we can," said Dean.

"Is there any doubt of it?" asked Harry.

"Indeed, yes," said Dean, in a skeptical way. "I have been for a long time trying to outwit the gang myself, but I have failed."

"I think we will find a way to fool them," declared Old King Brady.

The Bradys, with Dean and Peterson, in their disguises, secured rooms at the hotel. They remained about the place for a number of days.

Big Ike and the gang hung about the town in a sullen mood. It was plain that the revulsion of sentiment against them was having the effect of bringing matters nearer a crisis in Golden City than ever before.

For close observers could see that something was up.

There was a certain strange prescience that deep and underhand work was going on.

What this was remained to be seen.

The detectives, do their best, could not seem to get head or tail of its meaning.

They shadowed the different members of the gang closely.

Every method possible was employed. But beyond learning that the villains had secret meetings with certain road-agents in the hills nothing was gained.

The Beaver Run people sent some representatives down to hold a peace conference with the Golden City miners.

A truce was concluded, and a committee appointed to interview Big Ike and request him to refrain from further attempts to bring about trouble between the two communities.

This was not received by Big Ike in anything like a pleasant manner.

He grew exceedingly angry and made threats.

Thus matters stood in Golden City. But that very night the climax came.



Nearly every mining town of the stamp of Golden City is ruled by the traditional "bad man."

But it is a matter of history that sooner or later the same ruler is overthrown.

Law and order is bound sooner or later to assert itself. The miners of Golden City had suffered long and patiently.

That evening a large crowd were congregated in the bar-room of the hotel.

Drinking and card playing were progressing as usual.

Suddenly the word went around and a hush fell upon the company.

Big Ike came stalking in.

It could be seen at once that he was in an evil temper.

His henchmen, Flash Pete and Favor, were just behind him.

They walked up to the bar, and Big Ike thundered:

"Drinks fer my party."

"All right," said the bartender, as he tossed some gin into a glass and proceeded to make a toddy.

When it was completed he passed it over the counter to a smooth-faced man in a red shirt who stood beside Ike.

"What'll it be, Ike?"

The big bully glared at the man who had just received the toddy, and then at the bartender.

Then he reached forward and took the glass of toddy before the unknown could do so.

"Curse ye, Dooley," he hissed at the bartender. "Can't ye see me? Why don't ye pass it right?"

The stranger straightened up. The bartender looked frightened and said, apologetically, to the unknown:

"I'll mix ye another."

"Not until my friends are served," said Big Ike, menacingly. "We wait fer no one."

The stranger looked at the bartender, who was frightened. Then he faced Ike.

"Excuse me," he said, in a soft voice. "But that is a mistake. That drink is mine."

Big Ike raised his eyebrows and looked down upon the other with a cold glare.

"Yours?" he said.

"Yes. I refer to the bartender if he did not mix that drink for me."

"Wall, you can bet your life it's mine jest now, and likely to stay mine," declared Big Ike, as he raised the glass to drink. "Ye must know that I don't wait fer no man."

"Well, if it's not mine, it will never be yours," said the stranger.

He raised his right hand in a lightning sweep and dashed the glass from Ike's lips.

The liquor splashed over the ruffian's face. Aghast, every man in the barroom started for cover.

The bartender dropped under the bar.

Everybody looked for shooting. But so surprised was Big Ike that for a moment he could only stare at his opponent.

"Devil!" he hissed. "Who are you that dares to insult me?"

"A better man than you," said the stranger. "I'm Chicory Bill, of White Gulch. This ere's my passport."

A revolver stared Big Ike in the face.

The ruffian stood quite still and looked the other in the eye. It was a tableau.

"Chicory Bill!" he repeated. "You don't mean it? Why didn't ye say so afore?"

"You never gave me a chance," said Chicory Bill, quietly. "I'm a stranger here, and I expected a different welcome. I've heerd of the hospitality of Golden City. No man in any other town ever tried to steal my drink before."

Big Ike passed a hand across his mustache.

"Wall," he said. "I 'low it warn't right. But thet cussed bartender knows that I wait for no man."

"And he knows that I do not wait for you," said Chicory Bill.

"I've killed a man fer less than what you jest did."

"I've killed a man for winkin' his left eye at me. Durn it, but I'm trying to decide whether to kill you or not."

Big Ike was a coward.

His face grew white.

"Oh, come now," he said, "I've apologized. Hev a drink with me."

Chicory Bill put up his gun.

"I allus accepts an apology," he said. "I'll hev a gin toddy."

"An' mine is a whiskey high," cried Big Ike. "Dang it, but I'll make ye welcome to this town, Mister Chicory Bill."

"I can shoot the whiskers offen the moon," cried Chicory. "All up fer the drinks. Where in thunder is everybody?"

Reassured, the miners came tumbling back into the bar-room.

Drinks were indulged in all around.

Big Ike treated and then Chicory Bill treated. Everybody was in good humor.

Big Ike took a huge fancy to his new acquaintance.

"Dang it, but I like yer style," he said. "It ain't everybody that I take to, an' especially after they've called me down in my own town."

"Oh, that's all right," declared Chicory. "Come up to White Gulch and I'll make ye a present of the town."

"I'll go ye."

Thus the two dead shots talked and chaffed. Finally they sat down to a game of cards.

They were joined by Favor and Flash Pete.

Chicory was introduced to these two sports.

For some while they played in a friendly way. At length, some time past the midnight hour, Chicory arose and said:

"I reckon I'll take my leave. 'I'm stoppin' in camp up hyar aways in the hills. It's lonesome, and I wouldn't mind some company for the night. Are any of ye minded to ride up thar with me?"

## CHAPTER XIII.

### IN A TRAP.

This invitation caused the other three to exchange glances.



"Wall," said Big Ike. "I shall have to excuse myself."

"An' so will I," said Flash Pete.

"I'll go with ye," said Favor. "How far is it?"

"Oh, a couple of miles."

"Humph! That's an easy trip. "We'll come down early in the morning."

"Yes, unless ye are minded to listen to a little plan I have for a scoop," said Chicory, vaguely.

All were now interested.

"A scoop?" said Big Ike.

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"Well, I won't say much about it until to-morrow. But I've struek something good. Ye can expect to hear from me later. Good night to ye, friends."

"Good night."

Favor accompanied Chicory Bill out into the night. They walked on until well out of the little mining town.

Then Favor's curiosity got the better of him.

"Ye spoke of a scoop," he said. "Do ye mind tellin' what it is?"

"I'll tell ye when we get to camp," said Chicory. "Maybe ye won't care fer it."

"Is thar coin in it?"

"Yes."

"Well, you kin count on me."

"All right. Let me see. I left my cayuse in this ere thicket."

Chicory Bill stepped into a dark space among the trees.

Unsuspectingly Favor followed him. The next moment Chicory Bill's voice was heard:

"Run hard, run! We're in a hot place!"

But Favor was in a giant clutch. A bag covered his head, his arms were drawn behind him and he was forced to the ground a helpless prisoner.

In vain he fumed and raved, and kicked and cursed. There was no escape.

He was bound hand and foot and lifted between his captors and carried into the night.

For some distance he was carried thus. He was completely helpless and unable to resist.

After a while he was carried into a low-roofed building. Here, on a hearth, there burned a fire of logs.

When the bandage was removed from his eyes, Favor looked about him with surprise.

Over him stood the halfbreed, Wapsie Joe, Chicory Bill and the Beaver Run men, Dean and Peterson.

"Haw-haw! Don't know what tew make of it, do ye?" cried the big farmer Peterson, as he placed his arms akimbo and looked down critically into Favor's face.

"I rather think he knows us now," said Dean.

"He ought to," said Chicory Bill, or Young King Brady, who had so cleverly played the part of decoy. "I don't believe he'll forget me right away."

"Trapped!" gasped Favor.

"That's what," said Dean.

"What are ye goin' to do with me?" asked Favor.

"Ye'll find out pooty quick," said Peterson. "Wait till I put another log on the fire, pards. Hev you got that rope ready, Dud?"

"Yes," replied Dean. "We've got one of the gang. The next will be Big Ike."

Peterson placed the log on the fire.

It blazed up and illumined the interior of the old mill plainly.

Old King Brady knotted a rope and hung it over one of the rafters.

Favor stared at it, and his face grew ghastly.

"Are ye goin' to hang me?" he asked.

"It depends on you," replied Old King Brady. "We have made a vow to wipe the Dead-Shot Gang out of existence."

"I never did ye any harm," whimpered the villain. "What have ye got against me?"

"You're one of the gang."

"And is that why you're going to hang me?"

"Sure."

"But I'm willing to quit. I'll get out of the country an' never come back. For Heaven's sake, don't murder me!"

"The rope is the surest way. What do you think, boys?"

"Dead men tell no tales," said Harry.

"String him up!" said Dean.

"He'll be sure ter keep his word then," declared Peterson.

"I will swear to keep my word," cried Favor, desperately. "Oh, gentlemen, you will not kill me. Give me a chance. I'll do anything for you. Only let me live."

"Oh, what's the use," said Old King Brady. "Let's have it over with. They'll find his body here, and it will be a warning."

Peterson and Dean dragged the wretch forward.

The halter was placed about his neck.

Favor was in a wildly frantic state. He was in abject terror.

Madly, wildly, he pleaded for his life.

But his captors seemed obdurate. Old King Brady took hold of the rope, and it began to tighten.

Favor yelled and prayed and begged wildly. He was drenched in the cold perspiration of terror.

"Hold on," suddenly cried Harry. "I've got an idea."

"An idea?" said Old King Brady, giving the rope a little more tension.

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"Why, perhaps this chap can help us."

"Help us?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Look here, Favor, will you do a certain thing for us if we will spare your life?"

The villain gave a gasp and cried weakly:

"Yes—yes! I'll swear it! Let me live! I'll do anything!"

"Let up on the rope," said Harry, "now he has agreed."

"Durn him, don't take his word," said Peterson. "He's as treacherous as a snake."



"Oh, I mean it," cried Favor. "Believe, me, gents. I'll do it."

"All right," said Old King Brady, sternly. "We'll give him a chance. Let him sit down."

A stool was placed under the trembling villain. He was a fearful picture of terror and suffering.

"Now, Favor," said Old King Brady, "I'm going to ask you some questions. Upon your truthful answers depends your life."

"Yes, yes!" agreed the villain.

"Very good. Now, first I want you to tell me if you did not once live the life of a crook in New York?"

Favor gave a violent start. He hesitated.

"Come, I am waiting."

"Yes, yes," replied the wretch.

"Very good. Did you ever know of a man named Arthur Foss in the city? He had a clerk named Dudley Dean."

The expression upon Favor's face was an odd one.

He stared at the detective.

"Who are ye?" he gasped.

"Well," said Old King Brady, "since you are to die, and dead men tell no tales, I will tell you. We are New York detectives."

"Detectives?"

"Yes."

Favor gave a gasp of surprise. Then he said:

"Who are ye after?"

"The murderer of Arthur Foss."

"His clerk killed him. He left a confession."

"That is a lie, and you know it. Dudley Dean is innocent. You know who the murderer is."

"I swear I am not the man. I had nothing to do with it."

"But you know who the guilty man is."

"No, I swear it——"

"Take care!"

Favor became silent.

"Now, Favor," said Old King Brady. "Both you and Pete Conroy were pals with Ike Bent in New York. You know that Bent is the man. If you turn State's evidence you will save your own worthless life. That is all."

"I never went back on a pal," groaned Favor. "They will kill me."

"Who?"

"The rest of the gang."

"No they won't. At least, the real murderer won't, for he will never have the chance."

Favor was trembling and weak.

"So ye have tracked us away out here?" he asked.

"Where is the clerk?"

"He is here," said Dean.

"You?"

"Yes."

Favor was astonished. He stared at Dean, and then at Peterson.

"An' who is that old chap?" he asked.

"He is my father."

This was news to the Bradys as well as the prisoner. They turned quickly.

"It is true," said Peterson. "I happened to hear of Dudley's trouble, and I came out here to help him. That's what I am farming in Idaho for."

"And father has helped me greatly," declared Dean.

"On my word," said Old King Brady, "this case develops new surprises every moment."

"We never suspected it," declared Harry. "But we are glad to know it."

"It is now in order for our friend Favor here to make his confession and save his life."

Favor's eyes gleamed in a cunning way, as a new idea seemed to occur to him.

"Ye think Bent is the man?" he asked.

"Yes."

"And ye want me to swear against him?"

"We want you to give us evidence to convict him."

"Well," said Favor, thoughtfully, "I'll do that on one condition."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE CONFESSION.

"What is the condition?" asked Old King Brady.

"That ye get Pete Conroy to agree to the same thing."

"That is a bargain," declared Old King Brady.

"Ye mean it?"

"Yes."

"How be ye goin' to make Pete agree to it?"

"You shall see. We will leave it this way: You give us a written confession now and we will agree to bring Conroy to terms. We understand that he is the man you fear."

"Yes. He would call me a traitor, and he'd shoot me on sight."

"We'll see that he don't do that. He shall not know of your confession until after we have got his. Then we will depend upon you to help us entrap Bent. You can see that it will be for your interest."

A crafty light shone in the villain's eyes.

"Yes," he said, "I can see that, and I'll agree."

"Very good. Now, Harry, let us have the paper and ink."

Harry drew a small bottle of ink and a pen from his pocket. He also produced some paper.

It did not take him long to write out the complete confession of the wretch before him implicating Bent.

Then he released the cords on Favor's wrists and said:

"Read and sign it."

This Favor proceeded to do.

He gave a little shiver, and said:

"Now, ye must stand between me an' the gang. If ye don't, they'll kill me."

"We will take care of that."

Favor took the pen and made a scrawling signature. It was witnessed by Peterson and the Bradys.



Then Favor drew himself up.

"Now, keep yer word," he said. "I've kept mine."

"You are willing to go into court and swear to the truth of this, when Bent is brought up for trial?"

"Do ye think ye'll be able to bring him up for trial?"

"We expect to do so."

"Well, all right. I'll go into court when ye bring him up for trial on condition that I am not held for complicity and ye bring no charge ag'in me."

"You weren't a party to the murder, were you?"

"No."

"Then you need fear nothing."

"All right, gents. It's a go."

Old King Brady cut the fellow's bonds.

"Now," he said, sternly, "we have the evidence here of your betrayal of Bent. It is hardly necessary to say that you will do well to keep a tight mouth."

"I understand," said Favor, readily. "An' you kin bet I'll do so."

"Then freedom is yours."

Old King Brady freed the villain. Favor instantly started for the door of the mill.

He gave one backward look at the detectives and then plunged into the darkness of the night.

For a moment there was silence. Then Harry said:

"I don't know whether we have done right or not."

"Why?" asked Old King Brady.

"What if he goes right down and tells Bent all?"

"Ah, but he will not dare. Bent would shoot him for signing the confession."

"I think it is all safe," said Dean. "I feel confident that all will work right."

"If it does, we have the case won."

"Well, I should say so."

"It is a great victory."

Our friends then mutually congratulated each other, until Old King Brady said:

"Our next job is to trap Pete Conroy and make him do the same thing."

"Close in on Bent. We will have the evidence to convict him and clear the innocent man."

Dean looked supremely happy.

"One of the truest girl hearts in America, believing in my innocence, is waiting my return to New York," he said.

"We shall wish you joy," said Old King Brady. "And it is sure to be yours."

"And all due to you detectives," said Peterson, warmly.

"We do not deserve so much credit," said Old King Brady. "We are only doing our duty."

"But you have righted a great wrong."

"That knowledge is our reward."

They decided now to return to Golden City in their present disguises and wait developments.

So, leaving the old mill, they made their way down the mountain and soon were once more in the little mining town.

At that hour nearly everybody was in bed.

So the party went to their rooms in the hotel and turned in. Harry, as Chicory Bill, secured a room also.

It was a late hour the next morning when they appeared in the barroom.

The Eastern stage was just about to leave. A great crowd was gathered about the door.

The detectives, by arrangement, kept apart from Peterson and Dean. It was deemed best.

A number of miners were taking their leave of the diggings. The driver sat on his box holding the impatient horses in check.

Just then a shout was heard. A man came striding swiftly up the street.

It was Big Ike.

"Hold on!" he cried. "Is Jake Favor aboard the stage?"

There was a commotion.

"No, he ain't," replied the driver. "What's wrong now, Ike?"

"Jes this: He's cleaned up his duds an' disappeared. We kain't find him nowhar. I've a settlement with him afore he goes, an' if he tries ter board this stage, you hold him off. D' yer see?"

"Yas."

"Wall, mind it then."

"I'm mindin' it, Ike."

The detectives exchanged glances. In that moment they had sympathy for Favor.

Just then Ike's gaze fell upon Harry.

"Hello!" he cried. "Hyar's the chap he was with last night. I say, friend, kin you tell me where Jake Favor has gone?"

"He left me last night an' came back to town," said Harry. "I don't know where he is now."

"Ye're Chicory Bill, of White Gulch?"

"Yes."

"Wall, did he say anything to ye about any plans? Did he speak of leaving Golden City?"

"Not a word."

"That's queer. Look at that."

Bent held up a bit of note paper.

Harry glanced over it with much surprise.

"On my word," he exclaimed. "That is very odd."

Thus the paper read:

"Friend Ike—You an' I hev traveled together a long while, but we hev come to the parting of the ways. I must take my leave, but afore I go, I kin only say to you, thet the old Harry is hot on your heels. Git up an' git the minnit you read this or you are lost. Yours, J. FAVOR."

"What do ye think of it?" asked Bent. "Ain't he crazy?"

"It is very strange," agreed Harry.

"Wall, I should say so. I don't know whether he's luvy or what not. I wanter see him."

"Why don't you make a chase for him? I'll help ye."

"You will?"

"Yes."



"Then it's a go. I'll git my caynse at once."

Bent dashed into the corral back of the hotel. Old King Brady, with Dean and Peterson, had heard all and now the old detective drew near Harry.

"What is the plan?" asked the old detective.

"I see no better opportunity for working the decoy."

"Capital! We can make a prisoner of him and hold him till we get Conroy, which should be before another night."

"To be sure."

The plan certainly seemed a clever one.

It was therefore left to Harry to carry it out.

Bent now appeared leading a couple of ponies.

"Come on, Chicory," he called. "I've got a hoss fer you. I'll catch that Favor or I'll know the reason why."

"All right, Ike," agreed the pseudo Chicory Bill.

The two men vaulted into the saddle and galloped away. They rode out of town upon the mountain trail.

It was not long before another party followed them.

This consisted of three men, the big Wapsie Joe, Dean and Peterson.

They rode slowly on the trail of the two men ahead.

It was not long before the trail led them deep into a wild park or pocket in the hills.

Then suddenly Old King Brady put spurs to his cayuse.

"Come on," he said. "Let us ride them down."

All dashed forward at a lively gait.

In a few moments they turned the mountain wall and came full upon Harry and Big Ike.

They were sitting upon their horses looking off across the great valley below.

Big Ike wheeled his horse like a flash.

## CHAPTER XV.

### WHICH ENDS THE CASE.

Big Ike stared at the three newcomers. Then his face darkened.

A curse dropped from his lips.

"What the devil is all this?" he demanded. "Are we followed?"

"Hello!" said Harry. "It is friends all right."

"Friends?"

"Yes."

"Of yours it must be."

"Well, yes, of mine. But you must know Wapsie Joe?"

Big Ike scowled.

He reined his horse back. His face was as black as a thunder cloud.

"Let 'em go on," he said, gruffly. "I've no use for 'em."

"Hello, boys!" cried the pseudo Chicory Bill, familiarly. "Out prospecting, I take it?"

"No," replied Old King Brady. "We're lookin' for game."

"Game?"

"Yes."

"What kind?"

"Why, human game."

"The deuce! I hope I am not the game? How is it?"

"Oh, no. It is your companion."

"My companion?"

Big Ike reined his cayuse back like a wolf at bay. It was certain that he did not understand or like the situation.

"Do ye mean me?" he growled. "I kin tell ye I don't like joking."

"I hope you'll not do us the injustice to accuse us of that," said Dean, with a smile. "I assure you we are dead in earnest."

"You are, eh?"

"Yes, or, at least, I am."

"Who the devil are you?"

Dean bent a keen gaze upon the villain.

"You dare ask me that question?"

"I do."

"Then you do not recognize me?"

"Of course I don't. I never saw you before."

"Yes, you have. Just tax your memory. Did you never meet me in New York City?"

The villain gave a violent start. He looked at Dean in a searching way. His face was a trifle pale.

"I don't know you," he said.

"Yes, you do. Look me square in the eye. I am the man you tried to send to the gallows. You are the man who murdered James Foss. Now, do you know me?"

Big Ike gasped and turned a grayish pallor. His eyes burned like hot coals.

"Dudley Dean!" he said, hoarsely.

"You know me."

"What are you doing here?"

"I am seeking you, to demand that you right that awful wrong. I have fled from civilized haunts with the brand of murderer falsely placed upon me. You can remove it. I mean that you shall do so."

Big Ike slowly recovered himself. He glanced at the others and his lip curled in a cynical smile.

"You are the man who killed James Foss," he said. "You were justly convicted."

"That is a lie and you know it. Will you vindicate me?"

"Vindicate you?"

"Yes."

"How am I going to do that?"

"Give evidence that I am innocent. Admit that you are the murderer and set the matter right."

Big Ike whistled.

"You must think I am soft," he said. "Why should I do that? My neck is out of the halter. I am not a fool."

"Then you refuse to do it?"

"Of course I do."

"You know that you are the guilty man. Is not that so?"

"I admit nothing. Bah! What am I wasting time here for. Come on, Chicory Bill. We will——"

"Not yet!"



To his sheer horror and amazement Ike looked into the dark muzzle of a revolver held by Chicory.

"W-what the devil are you doing?" he gasped.

"I am making a prisoner of you, my friend," said Chicory. "And I want to tell you that I have perfectly clear proof of your guilt. Get down off your horse."

"But——"

"No back talk! Get down!"

White with rage, Bent glared at the other. But he slowly obeyed.

"W-what's the matter with ye?" he demanded. "I thought ye was rock bottom, Chicory. You throw away your best friend when you throw me away."

"You never were a friend to anybody," declared Chicory, coolly.

"And ye're a traitor," yelled Ike, making a wild leap for the trail below. But Dean was upon him like a wolf.

The others came to the young New Yorker's assistance, and the villain was handcuffed.

Thus overpowered, he became sullen and silent.

"Let's see," said Old King Brady. "The question is now, how to get him out of the country."

"I'll tell you," said Dean. "Father and I will take him down to Boise City, while you catch Conroy."

"That's a bargain," cried Harry.

"Oh, I see the point," said Big Ike. "Ye're goin' to take me back to New York."

"Yes."

"Ye think ye can convict me of that murder?"

"We can."

"Whar's yer evidence?"

"Here," said Old King Brady, as he produced the affidavit of Favor, duly signed and witnessed. With glaring eyes Bent read it.

"That's a forgery," he gritted.

"No it isn't," said Old King Brady. "What is more, Favor has agreed to go into court and swear against you to save his own neck."

Bent's face was a fearful picture. The deadliest of hate and fury shone there.

"The cursed traitor!" he gritted. "I'll have his heart for this."

"I don't believe it," said Old King Brady. "You have reached the end of your rope, Ike Bent."

But Bent remained defiant. However, arrangements were soon made, and he was led away by Dean and Peterson, and the Bradys set out on their return to the town.

When they arrived there, they were given a surprise.

At the hotel entrance a man stepped out of the barroom.

It was Jake Favor.

"Did ye git him?" he asked.

He was pale and trembling.

"Yes."

"Where is he now?"

"Under arrest and on his way to Boise City."

Favor wiped the cold sweat from his brow.

"Whew!" he exclaimed. "I hope he don't git away. If he does, it's all up with me. I've seen Conroy."

"Oh, you have!" exclaimed Old King Brady.

"Yes, and he agrees to back me up on the same terms you gave me."

"That's all right. Neither one of you had a hand in the murder?"

Favor hesitated a moment.

"Well," he said. "We was there. But Bent did the job."

"Then you were accessories?"

"I suppose so."

"Well," said the old detective, "I'll fix that. Come to New York with us and make your depositions to the District Attorney. We will see that you get free."

"Is that square?"

"Yes."

"All right," and the fellow gave a shrill whistle. Conroy at once appeared on the scene.

"It's all right, Pete," said Favor. "You agree to it?"

"On the same terms," said Flash Pete.

"Yes."

"All right."

Arrangements were quickly made. The two villains mounted horses and rode out of town at once with the Bradys.

The Dead-Shot Gang was thus broken up, and its power in Golden City ended forever.

In due time the Bradys, with their charges, reached Boise City. They found Dean and Peterson there in waiting. Big Ike was in the jail.

An early train, after the securing of requisition papers, took them East.

In due time they rolled into New York City. The prisoner was at once lodged in the Tombs.

Then Favor and Conroy went before the proper authorities and made a full confession implicating Bent in the murder.

Their sworn testimony was taken. Then they furnished bonds for appearance at the trial.

It was arranged, however, that these bonds were never forfeited. The two witnesses were furnished with a very short term of imprisonment for each.



But Big Ike was easily convicted.

He was sentenced to die in the electric chair. Seeing that the game was up, he made a full confession of the crime.

Thus, after a long period, and with the blight of a false charge against him, Dudley Dean was able to face the world once more cleared of the stain upon his honor.

The mystery of the Foss murder was then unravelled.

"And it is all owing to the wonderful work of the Bradys," declared Dean, gratefully. "I shall never forget it."

The two keen detectives came in for much praise. The chief was delighted.

"But I have another case for you," he declared. "If you handle it as well, you will win fresh glory. It is the most difficult yet."

"We will do our best," said Old King Brady, modestly.

What this case was we will leave it to a future story to disclose.

THE END.

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Read "THE BRADYS WITH A CIRCUS; OR, ON THE ROAD WITH THE WILD BEAST TAMERS," which will be the next number (131) of "Secret Service."

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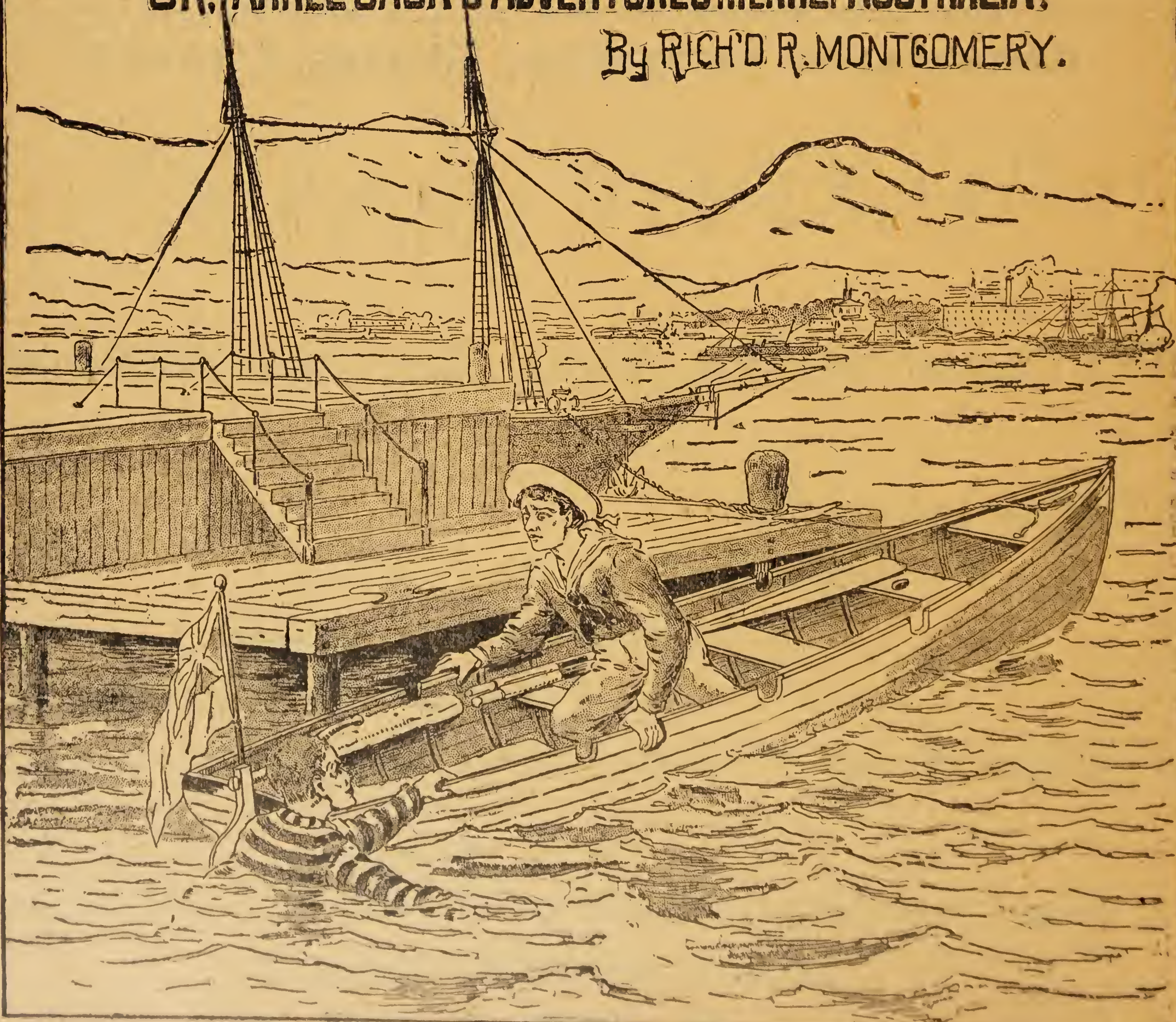
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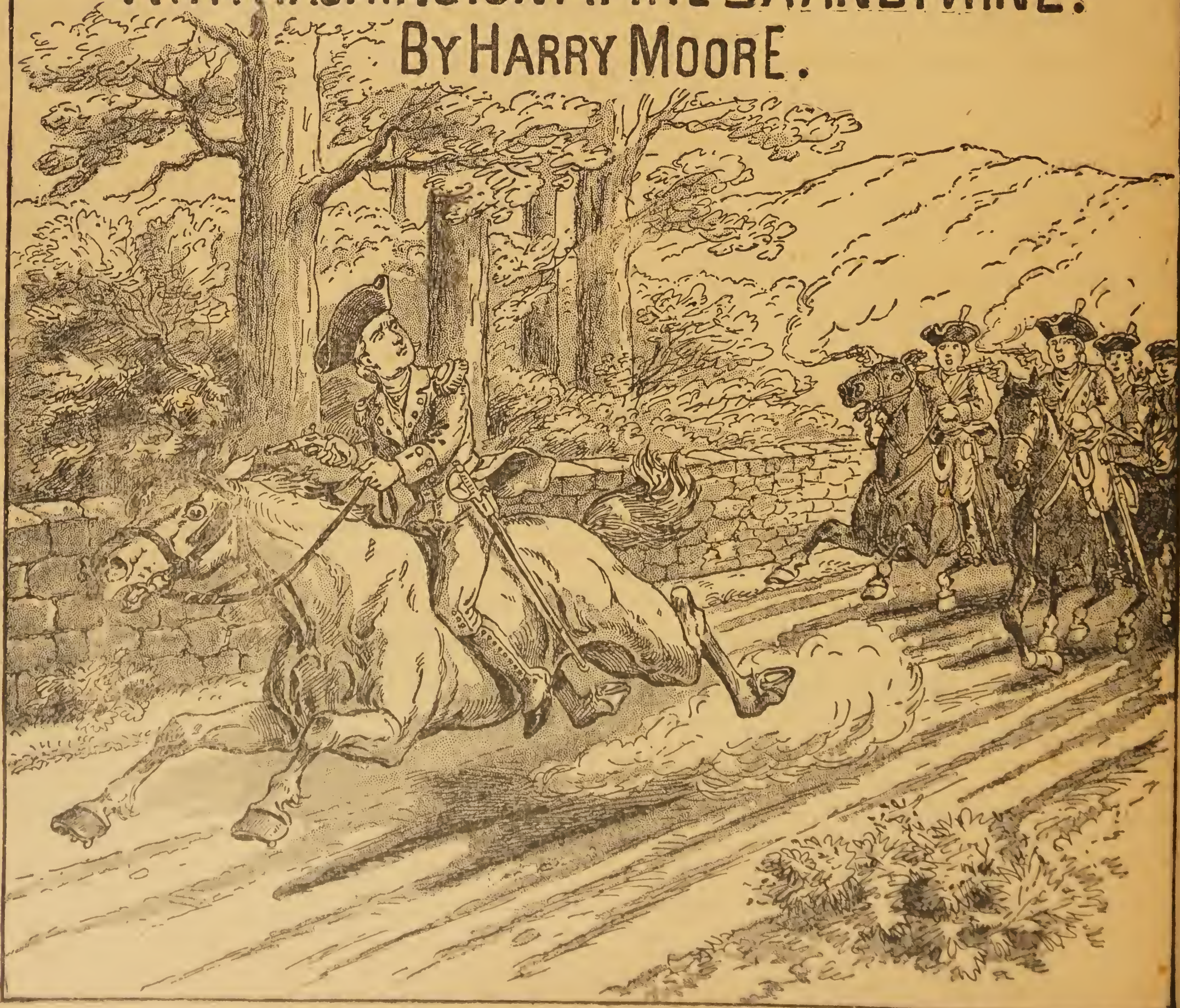
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